

THE SOUL
OF THE SOLDIER
THOMAS TIPLADY

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THE SOUL OF THE SOLDIER







THE SOUL
OF THE SOLDIER

SKETCHES OF LIFE AT THE FRONT

BY

THOMAS TIPLADY

CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES

AUTHOR OF 'THE KITTEN IN THE CRATER'

WITH A FRONTISPIECE

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TO THE MEMORY
OF THE MANY 'WHITE MEN' I HAVE KNOWN
AND LOVED IN THE LONDON TERRITORIALS,
WHO, BEING DEDICATE TO THEIR COUNTRY
AND THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY, WENT OVER
THE PARAPET AND DID NOT RETURN.

'These laid the world away ; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth : gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene
That men call age ; and those who would have been
Their sons they gave—their immortality.'



P R E F A C E.

THE sketches in this book and in my previous one, *The Kitten in the Crater*, are attempts to show the soul of the soldier serving in France as I have seen it during the year and a half that I have been with him. If the truth of the sketches is to be appreciated it is necessary to remember that the soldier depicted is the soldier at the Front, and not the soldier at the Base. The Front calls out the highest in our men, but the Base makes no call on the heroic and magnificent. It lets the best in men lie sleeping and wakes only the commonplace. The noble traits lie hidden while the meaner and more commonplace characteristics are tempted out into the sun. Some, therefore, who have only seen the soldier ten or more miles behind the firing-line are inclined to think that I have painted him whiter than he is, and have left out the mud stains on him. They are mistaken. I have painted him exactly as I have seen him. The whole series of sketches was finished before I had any experience of him at the Base. It is the man at the Front I have sketched, and his glory and greatness were so radiant that the mud on him could not be seen. It sank into insignificance, and could not dim

the splendour of his character. It was as the spots on the sun. I have now been for some weeks at the Base, where the white light of his character retires from view, as is the tendency with man's finest qualities, and I can now see more mud on him, but I have seen the other—the heroism, the unselfishness, the splendour of him—and I cannot forget. Those who have only seen the soldier at the Base or in England have only seen half of him, and that the worse half.

It is a Padre's privilege and duty to be the voice with which, in public worship, the soldiers speak to God; and by which they send their last thoughts to their friends at home. He is their voice when they are inarticulate through wounds or sickness, and when they lie silent in the grave. He speaks of their hopes and fears, hardships and heroisms, laughter and tears. As best he may he tries to tell, to those who have a right and a longing to know, how they thought, and how they bore themselves in the great days of trial, when all risked their lives and many laid them down. Soldiers, as a rule, are either inarticulate or do not care to speak of themselves; and the Padre has to be their spokesman, if ever their deeper thoughts and finer actions are to be known to their friends. To do this he may have to bring himself into the picture, or even illustrate a common thing in their lives by a personal experience of his own. To reveal life and thought at the Front in the third person, and without sacrificing truth and vividness, requires a degree of

literary power and art which cannot be expected of a Padre to whom writing is but a by-product, and not his main work.

I have written but little of military operations—these things are not in my province. Moreover, they are not the things which are most revealing. The presence of Spring is first and most surely revealed by the flowers in our gardens and lanes; and the soldier's spirit is most clearly seen in the little things that happen on the march, in his billet or in the dressing-station. Some things are not seen at all. They are only felt, and my opinion about them must be taken for what it is worth. One knows what the men are by their influence on one's own mind and life. I do not judge the morality and spirituality of our soldiers entirely by their habits and speech, for these are but outward and clumsy expressions of the inner life and are largely conventional. There is something else to put in the reckoning:—

' All, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount.

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.'

And to find out what the soldiers are worth to us we must somehow get behind their words and actions, and find out what they are worth to God, whose terrible wheel of war is shaping their characters.

I judge the men by the total effect of the impact of their souls on mine. I know their thoughts and feelings by the thoughts and feelings they inspire in me. 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' There are certain thoughts and emotions that only come to me strongly when I am with the soldiers, or when I am living again with them in memory, and so I take these as their gift to me, and judge the men by their influence on my character. Character is, in its influence, subtle as Spring. Words and actions by themselves are too coarse and conventional to do anything but mislead us in judging the quality of our men. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Not by their leaves. Fruit is *seed*. In the seed the tree reproduces itself. And reproduction, whether in physical, moral or spiritual life, is the test of vitality. On the day of Pentecost the fruits of Peter's faith were 3000 converts. His faith was vital and reproduced itself in others. At the Front we do not estimate a man's courage by his words, decorations, or even deeds. We estimate it by the courage he *inspires* in us. If in his presence we feel braver than is our wont we know that he is a brave man and has reserves of courage. Some men lower our courage. Others increase it. Yet we cannot say how. It is their fruit,

and it takes root in our hearts and springs up. Christ blasted the leafy fig-tree to teach us to judge men by fruit—the stronger expression of life; and not by leaves—the weaker expression. Without ignoring the words and actions of our soldiers, I still judge them mainly by their influence. I have tried to show the inner life of the men by relating little incidents which happened without rehearsal, and words which were spoken without premeditation. Such are the authentic utterances of the soul. They are the grains of gold among the sand, and the red arteries in the tissues of flesh.

I have not loaded my pages unduly with the ghastly details of war, because their effect on the mind of the reader who has not been at the Front would be false and distorting. The reader would be more horrified in imagining them than our soldiers are in seeing them. I have tried rather to show life at the Front, with its mingling of red and gold, horror and happiness, as it affects the soldier; so that his friends at home may see it as he sees it, and with his sense of proportion. If I could sketch clearly what I have seen, my pictures would create a truer sympathy between the home and the trench. Some would find comfort for their hearts, and others would awake to a new and noble seriousness. In to-day's paper there is an account of a murder trial. A wife had been unfaithful, and her husband had shot her on the station as he was about to return to France on the 'leave train.' In a noble

letter of forgiveness and appeal, written just before going into battle, he had said, ' If you *knew* what we had to go through you would have gone straight.' The whole tragedy is there. Soldiers have suffered much through imperfect sympathies. They have been pitied for the wrong things, and left to freeze when they needed warmth. Only when we realize their dignity and greatness, and the true nature of their experiences, can we be their comrades and helpers. Life at the Front is brutal and terrifying, and yet our soldiers are neither brutalized nor terrorized, for there is something great and noble at the Front which keeps life pure and sweet and the men gentle and chivalrous. When ' the boys ' come home their friends will, in almost every case, find them just as bright, affectionate and good as when they went out. The only change will be a subtle one—a deepening in character and manly quality, a broadening in mind and creed, and an impatience with cant and make-believe, whether in politics or business, Christianity or Rationalism. There will be an air of indefinable greatness about them as of men who have been at grips with the realities of life and death.

In a footnote to one of his songs, Mr. Edward Teschemacher says that the Gipsies, as they wander through the country, leave a sprinkling of wild-flowers at the cross-roads to indicate, to those who come after them, the road they have taken. These flowers are known as ' the Patterain.'

The essays that follow are my 'Patterain'—wild-flowers plucked in France to mark the turning-points on the red road trod by the London Territorials during the long months I have been with them. I would the flowers were worthier, but such as I have I give, and I take them out of my heart to give.

' Where my caravan has rested,
Flowers I leave you on the grass ;
All the flowers of love and memory ;
You will find them when you pass.'

THOMAS TIPLADY

BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
FRANCE



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THE SOUL OF THE SOLDIER

INTO THE UNKNOWN

IT was a wild March day when our boat entered the Channel. The cliffs at Folkestone and Dover were whiter than their wont, white with driven snow. It was not unfitting that we should last see our country adorned as a bride in her chaste white robes. Is she not the virgin mother of 'white' men? and was she not bidding farewell to scores of sons who would never see her face again? It was meet that she should don her ceremonial robes of whiteness that they might know that she, for whom they were to die, was worthy; and know, too, that she trusted them to uphold her fair fame. Pure, austere, noble, our Motherland looked as we watched her form slowly fading from sight. Her eyes were on the sea and her heart with those who sailed it. Often had her sons gone forth to die for her, Nelson at Trafalgar, Scott at the South Pole, Wolfe in Canada, and Gordon at Khartoum; and with a grey mist in her eyes she had stood motionless and watched them down the Channel. None ever failed her, and none ever forgot his last sight of her. In after days we often found our hearts looking back across the Channel, and it was always in her spotless white robe that we beheld her.

The ways of the sea were crowded with ships.

Britannia ruled the waves. Submarines might lurk in the green depths like snakes in the grass ready to dart, with poisonous fangs, at unarmed travellers; but they shrank back before the approach of the patrolling men-of-war. Whether or not we were escorted I could not say. A destroyer would steal out of the grey mist; go on before us for a little way, and then lose itself in the watery waste. Another would appear, and in like manner vanish. The navy seemed to have a thousand eyes, and its movements were quick, silent, and supple as a cat's when it has scented prey. It seemed impossible that anything could escape its vision and omniscience.

Everything was happening, and yet nothing seemed to happen, and we reached Boulogne without any incident occurring which could give a headline to a newspaper.

When we landed on the quay I felt as bewildered as the blind man who, as his eyes began to open, saw men as trees walking. I had not been in the army a week, and my uniform was but three days old. I had in my pocket a little booklet giving the signs of rank, but, at that moment, I had not learned to tell a major from a lieutenant-colonel. Of French I knew not a word. We had to report to an officer in a hut on the quay, and he gave me the time of the train, but I had no idea where it was going to take me. A French porter took my valise, and I followed his barrow to make sure of the station. I paid him what he asked, though he asked more than enough. As he held the silver in his hand he looked at it as though it were the Sphinx asking him riddles upon the answering of which

his life depended ; or as if it were some magic coin that might change into gold if he looked long enough at it. After a few moments he saw that it was neither going to ask him riddles, turn into twins, nor change into gold, so the imaginative Gaul, with a disappointed air worthy of Sarah Bernhardt, put it in his pocket, sulkily lifted the handles of his barrow, and went back to fleece another sheep. A vivacious porter cheerfully took possession of my belongings, and, with an energetic manner which seemed to say, ' Let me show you how to win the war,' carried them off to the train. Some time or other the train began to move. It seemed a long time in getting into its stride, but my companions informed me that it had not any stride to get into. Its best was a crawl, and its worst a halt. There would be no monotony, however, for it would ring the changes first on the one and then on the other. Nor would the element of surprise be lacking, for it would stop when we least expected it, and move on again the moment after we had come to the conclusion that the wheels had been taken off and sent back to bring another train. Companions told me I should have to report at St. Omer, where the Principal Chaplain was to be found. When I asked them at what hour we should arrive, they laughed. A troop train in France, I was informed, had none of the shallow cocksureness of an English train. It did not fix a time to arrive and then tamely turn up at that hour. It rather regarded a journey as a profound and mysterious adventure. It fixed no time for arrival and defied any one to prophesy it. Such a regard for time killed the poetry of travelling and made it prosaic. The

railway authorities made the arrival as problematic as a marriage, and we were like young ladies sitting round a dinner-table counting the cherry-stones on their plates. The great event might take place 'this year, next year, sometime, never.' The veterans in the carriage settled down as if it were to be 'next year.' They were easy to distinguish. Human nature is the same everywhere, and in war as in peace. No one likes to be thought a novice, and every one admires a veteran. This encourages one who has already been 'out' to pose on returning from 'leave' as one to whom nothing can come new. Man is a born actor, and readily adds to nature, art. Some of us were on our first journey and needed assurance and help, so we asked the veterans flattering questions, and they told us all we wanted to know in the ready and patronizing way of elder brothers. Our humble, admiring manner pleased them and created a warm family feeling in the carriage. Besides, we should get our own back on the next generation of new-comers when, with the air of war-soiled veterans, we returned from our first leave in a few months' time. The veterans read their magazines in a bored manner, which suggested that nothing less than an earthquake could interest them. They were sated with adventure, and their grand manner greatly impressed us. They were a mirror in which we saw ourselves as we should be in a few months of time. When it grew dark they drew candles out of their capacious pockets, and this action seemed little short of sublime. We had never thought of candles. Poor innocents! we had expected electric lights in the train. Later they turned over and went

to sleep. Our wonder deepened. Sleeping on the way to the war! What men they must be! After a time they got up, took their haversacks off the rack, and brought out food, tin mugs, and bottles. We were ashamed. We had nothing. No-vice was written all across us. We had expected, if not a dining-car on the train, at least restaurants at the stations or Y.M.C.A. stalls. With generous hands and kindly, amused eyes, the veterans insisted on our sharing all they had. That was the army way in France, and we must fall in with it. Besides, they, too, had been novices. We were like green pears, they seemed to say, in time we should ripen and be as they were. Such, indeed, was our fervent hope.

As the train crawled along we looked out through the windows, for we were too excited to read or sleep. Those things were for grown-ups, and we were only children as yet. The ground was covered with snow, and at every level-crossing we saw blue-nosed khaki-clad Tommies with fixed bayonets, keeping guard. They were everywhere, and, if only the train had moved faster, we might have thought that we were in England. When we stopped at a station, Tommies leaned out of the windows and asked the French porters the name of the place. I hope the porters understood English as spoken in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Somerset, or Suffolk. Their answers certainly left nothing to be desired—except the meaning. The darkness grew, and we crawled on like children going to a school which has had the misfortune to miss scarlet fever when another school has got it and closed down.

The veterans made guesses as to our progress. ' We have now passed —, in an hour, with luck, we shall reach —, in another hour or so —, and then, etc., etc.' We did not know the station names they mentioned, but we could follow the argument, and were assured that we should get to St. Omer—sometime. As a matter of fact we got there about nine o'clock. On the platform another chaplain joined me. He, too, was a novice, but he knew a little French, and I felt relieved. We decided to hang together—comrades in distress. Our baggage we left in the cloak-room and fared forth into the dark unknown. We asked one of the veterans the way into the town, and he offered to direct us to the Principal Chaplain's department. There were no lights, because German airmen had developed an impolite habit of coming over at night to drop their visiting cards in the town. We trudged through the snow, and the veteran, after asking a military policeman for information, put us in the right street and bade us good-bye. We found that the hour was too late to report to the Principal Chaplain, so we were sent to the Town Commandant, who gave us ' a chit ' and sent an orderly with us to a small hotel in a side street. There we were served with supper and went to bed. Next morning we reported to Dr. Simms, the Principal Chaplain, and a most gracious man. He appointed me to the 56th Division of London Territorials, and said that the train would leave at 9.30 in the evening. The other chaplain was appointed to a hospital, and was to travel by the same train. We had the day before us, so determined to see the ancient town into which we had been thrown.

The cathedral we found very beautiful, and as there were a funeral and a celebration of Mass for children proceeding at the same time, we found it very interesting also. We sought out the canteen—one of the largest in France—and bought a few useful articles; then, as we passed down the street, my companion met a friend and brought him back with us to the hotel. He was in charge of one of the many river tanks for distilling water. The tanks were ready, so that, when we advanced, we should be able to get pure water even if the Germans poisoned all the wells and streams. He had been waiting many months for the advance, and was getting weary—and that was long, long ago. I wonder if he is there still? By 9.30 P.M. we were in the train. We were no longer the novices of the night before. Our candles and cakes and ginger-beer bottles were evidence of that. We were fast becoming veterans. During the long hours of the night we crawled to Abbeville. We got there about five o'clock on a cold and frosty morning, and our next train would not leave till nine A.M. There was a canteen-stall, and we bought some cakes and hot coffee. Then we went into a small hut set aside for officers and nurses. Round a stove that needed poking every few minutes, and which, in grateful return for this attention, gave out heat that might possibly have melted butter in time for breakfast, were three nurses sitting. An officer brought them some chocolate. Four other officers played a game of cards in a corner. Two or three were lying on the floor asleep. There were no chairs except for the nurses, so we spread our coats on the floor. In an hour the floor was

covered with sleeping officers. The one next to me was wearing a sheepskin coat, and was as handsome as any boy that ever dazzled a mother's eye or brought the light into a maiden's face. He had been home on leave, and was going straight back to the trenches. He was sleeping, but I imagined that there was a mother somewhere in England who could not sleep.

The train came about nine o'clock, and we got in. It went about eleven. At three in the afternoon I reached Candas, the nearest station to my Division. Bidding good-bye to the other chaplain, I looked for a conveyance. There was nothing to be had ; but a cart had been sent for five other officers, and I persuaded them to make room for me. It was loaded to its fullest capacity with our baggage, and we had then to deposit ourselves on the top of that. We looked most ungainly and felt most uncomfortable, but took matters not too seriously. One of the officers leaned too near the wheel, and the rubbing wore a hole through his haversack. We jolted along past batteries of field artillery encamped in the villages and reached the divisional headquarters about five P.M. After reporting to the general officer commanding I got into an old London motor 'bus that had been painted the colour of a warship, and was carried to the village where my regiment was billeted. I reported to the colonel, was served with tea, given a servant, and provided with a billet. That night in a cold, damp, French farmhouse I slept for the first time in my valise. It was the sleep of a tired and homesick man. I had reached the edge of the unknown, and was feeling utterly alone in the world ; for I had parted with all my old friends

and associations and had, as yet, had no time to make new ones. Every man feels lonely on the first night with a new regiment, but a chaplain is an odd one, he is the only one of his kind in the regiment, and his vocation makes men regard him as a being apart and one to fight shy of; so, perhaps, he is the loneliest of all. People think too much of a parson's sanctity and too little of his humanity, and it is bad for everybody. Our hearts are just like other men's—red and warm and unchanged by the colour of the cloth we wear—and our needs are the same. This is a simple and obvious truth, but one cannot be a parson long without realizing that it is a truth not generally understood.

The regiment was on the march. It had come from Flanders, where it had been since October 1914. It was now going into the line from which the Somme battle was to begin in the coming July. We rose next morning in the dark and marched away in the grey light of dawn. I had reached the verge of the Unknown and, taking my place with the doctor—a real 'white man,' I marched into it with my regiment. Red was the way and black the skies, but the men were white.

THE CROSS AT NEUVE CHAPELLE

THE war has been fought in a Roman Catholic country where there are crucifixes erected at all the chief cross-roads to remind us that, in every moment of doubt as to the way of life, and on whichever road we finally decide to walk, whether rough or smooth, we shall need the Saviour and His redeeming love. We have seen the Cross so often when on the march, or when passing down some trench, that it has become inextricably mixed up with the war. When we think of the war the vision of the Cross rises before us, and when we see the Cross we think of processions of wounded men who have been broken to save the world. Wherever we have laid a martyred soldier to rest we have placed over him, as the comment on his death, a simple white cross bearing his name. We never paint any tribute on it. None is needed, for nothing else could speak so eloquently as a cross—a white cross. White is the sacred colour in the army of to-day, and the cross is the sacred form. In after years there will never be any doubt as to where the line of Liberty ran which held back the flood and force of German tyranny. From the English Channel to Switzerland it is marked for all time by the crosses on the graves of French and British soldiers. Whatever may be our views about the erection of crucifixes by the wayside and at the cross-roads, no

one can deny that they have had an immense influence for good on our men during the war in France.

The experience of many a Tommy is expressed in the following Belgian poem :—

' I came to a halt at the bend of the road ;
I reached for my ration, and loosened my load ;
I came to a halt at the bend of the road.

O weary the way, Lord ; forsaken of Thee,
My spirit is faint—lone, comfortless me ;
O weary the way, Lord ; forsaken of Thee.

And the Lord answered, " Son, be thy heart lifted up,"
I drank, as thou drinkest, of agony's cup ;
And the Lord answered, " Son, be thy heart lifted up.

For thee that I loved, I went down to the grave,
Pay thou the like forfeit thy Country to save ;
For thee that I loved, I went down to the grave."

Then I cried, " I am Thine, Lord ; yea, unto this last."
And I strapped on my knapsack, and onward I passed.
Then I cried, " I am Thine, Lord ; yea, unto this last."

Fulfilled is the sacrifice, Lord, is it well ?
Be it said—For the dear sake of country he fell.
Fulfilled is the sacrifice, Lord, is it well ?'

The Cross has interpreted life to him and has provided the only acceptable philosophy of the war. It has taught boys just entering upon life's experience that, out-topping all history and standing out against the background of all human life, is a Cross on which died the Son of God in redeeming love. It has made the hill of Calvary stand out above all other hills in

history. Hannibal, Cæsar, Napoleon, these may stand at the foot of the hill, as did the Roman soldiers, but they are made to look mean and insignificant as the Cross rises above them showing forth the figure of the Son of Man. Against the sky-line of human history stands the Cross, and all else is in shadow. The way-side crosses at the front and the flashes of roaring guns may not have taught our soldiers much history, but they have taught them the central fact of history ; and all else will have to accommodate itself to that or be disbelieved. The Cross of Christ is the centre of the picture for evermore, and the grouping of all other figures must be round it. To our men it can never again be made a detail in some other picture. Seen also in the light of their personal experience it has taught them that as a cross lies at the basis of the world's life and shows bare at every crisis of national and international life, so at the root of all individual life is a cross. They have been taught to look for it at every parting of the ways. Suffering to redeem others and make others happy will now be seen as the true aim of life, and not the grasping of personal pleasure or profit. They have stood where high explosive shells thresh out the corn from the chaff, and the true from the false. They have seen the facts in a light that lays bare ; and the cant talked by sceptical armchair philosophers will move them as little as the twittering of sparrows on the house-tops.

For three long years our front line trenches have run through what was once a village called Neuve Chapelle. There is nothing left of it now. But there is something there which is tremendously impressive. It is a

crucifix. It stands out above everything, for the land is quite flat around it. The cross is immediately behind our firing trench, and within two or three hundred yards of the German front line. The figure of Christ is looking across the waste of 'No Man's Land.' Under His right arm and under His left are British soldiers holding the line. Two 'dud' shells lie at the foot of the cross. One is even touching the wood, but though hundreds of shells must have swept by it, and millions of machine-gun bullets, it remains undamaged. Trenches form a labyrinth all round it. When our men awake and 'stand to' at dawn the first sight they see is the cross; and when at night they lie down in the side of the trench, or turn into their dug-outs, their last sight is the cross. It stands clear in the noonday sun, and in the moonlight it takes on a solemn grandeur. I first saw it on a November afternoon when the sun was sinking under heavy banks of cloud, and it brought to me vividly the scene as it must have been on the first Good Friday when the sun died with its dying Lord, and darkness crept up the hill of Calvary and covered Him with its funeral pall to hide His dying agonies from the curious eyes of wicked and unbelieving men. I had tea in a dug-out, and it was dark when I left. Machine-guns were sweeping 'No Man's Land' to brush back enemies that might be creeping towards us through the long grass; and the air was filled with a million clear cracking sounds. Star-shells rose and fell, and their brilliant and pure lights lit up the silent form on the cross. For three years night and day Christ has been standing there in the midst of our soldiers with arms outstretched in blessing. They

have looked up at Him through the clear starlight of a frosty night ; and they have seen His pale face by the silver light of the moon as she has sailed her course through the clouds. In the gloom of a stormy night they have seen the dark outline of His cross, and caught a passing glimpse of His figure by the flare of the starshells. What must have been the thoughts of the sentries in the listening-posts as all night long they gazed at the cross ; or of the officers as they passed down the trench to see that all was well ; or of some private sleeping in the trench and, being awakened by the cold, taking a few steps to restore the blood's circulation ? Deep thoughts, I imagine, much too deep for words of theirs or mine. And when the battle of Neuve Chapelle was raging and the wounded, whose blood was turning red the grass, looked up at Him, what thoughts must have been theirs ! Would they not feel that He was their big Brother, and remember that blood had flowed from Him as from them ; that pain had racked Him as it racked them ; and that He thought of His mother and of Nazareth as they thought of their mother and the little cottage they were never to see again ? When their throats became parched and their lips swollen with thirst would they not remember how He too had cried, ' I thirst ' ; and, most of all, would they not call to mind the fact that He might have saved Himself, as they might, if He had cared more for His own happiness than the world's ? As their spirits passed out through the wounds in their bodies would they not ask Him to remember them as their now homeless souls knocked at the gates of His Kingdom ? He had stood by them

all through the long and bloody battle, while hurricanes of shells swept over and around Him. I do not wonder that the men at the Front flock to the Lord's Supper to commemorate His death. They will not go without it. If the Sacrament is not provided they ask for it. In England there never was such a demand for it as we find at the Front. There is a mystic sympathy between the trench and the Cross and between the soldier and the Saviour.

And yet, to those who willed the war and drank to the day of its coming, even the Cross has no sacredness. It is to them but a tool of war. An officer told me that during the German retreat from the Somme they noticed a peculiar accuracy in the enemy's firing. The shells followed an easily distinguishable course. So many casualties occurred from this accurate shelling that the officers set themselves to discover the cause. They found that the circle of shells had for its centre the cross-roads, and that at the cross-roads was a crucifix that stood up clearly as a landmark. Evidently the cross was being used to guide the gunners, and was causing the death of our men. But a more remarkable thing came to light. The cross stood close to the road, and when the Germans retired they had sprung a mine at the cross-roads to delay our advance. Everything near had been blown to bits by the explosion except the cross, which had not a mark upon it. And yet the cross could not have escaped except by a miracle. They therefore set themselves to examine the seeming miracle, and came across one of the most astounding cases of fiendish cunning. They found that the Germans had made a concrete socket for the

cross so that they could take it out or put it in at pleasure. Before blowing up the cross-roads they had taken the crucifix out of its socket, removed it to a safe distance, and, when the mine exploded, had put the cross back so that it might be a landmark to direct their shooting. And now they were using Christ's instrument of redemption as an instrument for our men's destruction. But our young officers resolved to

' Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,'

and restore the Cross to its work of saving men. They waited till night fell, and then removed the cross to a point a hundred or two yards to the left. When in the morning the German gunners fired their shells their observers found that the shells fell too far wide of the cross, and they could make nothing of the mystery. It looked as if some one had been tampering with their guns in the night. To put matters right they altered the position of their guns, so that once more the shells made a circuit round the cross. And henceforth our soldiers were safe, for the shells fell harmlessly into the outlying fields. Nor was this the only time during their retreat that the Germans put the Cross to this base use and were foiled in their knavery.

When a nation scraps the Cross of Christ and turns it into a tool to gain an advantage over its opponents, it becomes superfluous to ask who began the war, and easy to believe in the horrors and depravities which have been reported during the waging of it.

The Cross on Calvary was the arbiter in the fate of the Jewish nation. When the Jewish people bade the

Roman soldiers crucify Christ they bade them crucify their race. In destroying Him they destroyed Jerusalem ; and in rejecting Him they became rejected of God and man. For nineteen hundred years they have been without a home, wandering over the face of the earth. ' His blood be on us and on our children,' they cried fiercely, and heaven has granted their prayers to the last letter ; and the world has stood aghast at its horrors. For nearly two thousand years persecution has overtaken them in every country they have entered. Their blood has marked their footsteps as Christ's marked the path to Calvary when they sent Him to His death. Even to-day there is no battle in which Jews are not slaying Jews. Though they are fighting for every land, they still have no land to call their own. They are one of the world's great races, yet since they rejected Christ they have been under a curse that nothing could lift, and they have been oppressed and tortured time and again by races inferior to them. On Calvary they erected a cross for Christ, but they erected another for themselves ; and as the two thieves outlived Christ in misery so have they. Long centuries pass and the end is not yet. As Christ judges the nations at the last, in the land beyond death, so He judges them now, separating the sheep from the goats. He judged the Jews from the Cross and cast them into the outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth, and where the worm dieth not, no, not even in nineteen hundred years. Now there are signs of the curse lifting and of the resurrection of the Jewish nation. There is a new judgment of the nations proceeding, and who shall predict what shall

be ? The Cross of Christ is the arbiter, and our attitude towards it decides our fate. I have seen the attitude of our soldiers towards the cross at Neuve Chapelle and towards that for which it stands ; and I find more comfort in their reverence for Christ and Christianity than in all their guns and impedimenta of war.

The Cross of Christ towers above the wrecks of time, and the nations will survive that stand beneath its protecting arms in the trenches of righteousness, liberty, and truth.

THE SONGS OUR SOLDIERS SING

IT has been said that Gray saunters along the avenues in the Garden of Immortality with a very slender volume of poems under his arm, but that he finds there many a song-writer who gained admittance by showing the gate-keeper a single sheet. Whatever accounts for the partiality of the gate-keeper, it is certain that prose-writers find it more difficult to get into the garden than poets. Read old Father Time a scientific, theological, or philosophical treatise and he shakes his head doubtfully and asks you to come again when he has had more time to consider your worthiness ; but read him an ode like Keats's ' Autumn,' a song like Burns's ' To Mary in Heaven,' or a hymn like Toplady's ' Rock of Ages,' to say nothing of an epic like *Paradise Lost* or a play like *Hamlet*, and in you go at once. Poetry keeps the heart fresh and the eye clear. It tears the mask from the face of life, to reveal its beauty ; and opens the secret door in the blank wall of death to show us paradise. Like the nightingale, its songs are heard in the black night of doubt and sorrow ; and, like the lark, it is the first to mark the dawn of hope, and wake us from the stupor of despair. It croons over the cradle and pours its passionate song over the trench. It strips pride of its pretensions and shows that ' rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's

the gowd for a' that.' Farm and barn and trench are wrapped in purer light than ever shone on land or sea. No wonder then the Old Man at the gate opens the garden of immortal remembrance so readily to the poet. He has heard the arguments of philosophers and seen the discoveries of scientists, but they do not keep old age at bay nor bring back his lost youth or friends. They bring no wings on which his aspirations may soar, nor open up the fountains of his heart that they may find outlet. The poet alone frees him. The poet alone has the magic power that brings back his lost realms of Greece and Rome. Poetry is popularly supposed to have some connexion with long hair, but, if it has, it is with the long hair of Samson, for as his strength lay in his hair, so the strength of a nation lies in its poets. It is worthy of note that as soon as this war became a war of sheer endurance a great revival of poetry broke out. Now the poets compete in popularity with the novelists. Never in our history have the poets had such an open door to the publisher's office or received such a welcome at the bookseller's shop. Nor is it without significance that in the darkest hour of the war, the nation called to the premiership one who, though he has never published a line of verse, is essentially, and above all things, a poet. The necessity for poetry is fully and officially recognised by the military authorities at the Front. Every Division has its own concert party. These men are chosen out of the ranks because they can sing, and their one task is to provide nightly concerts for the men. They are provided with a good hall, or tent, or open-air position; and they are given enough money

to buy stage scenery and appropriate dress. Every one attends their concerts, from the General to the private ; and while their entertainments last the war is forgotten. A charge is made at the door, but the balance-sheet is published for all ranks to see ; and the profits are distributed among the Divisional Charities. Among the many Divisional concert parties may be named ' The Bow Bells,' ' The Duds,' ' The Follies,' ' The Whizzbangs,' ' The Fancies,' and ' The Giddigoats.' But the singing in the concert rooms is but a small fraction of the singing one hears in the Army. . On every march, and in every billet and mess, there is the sound of singing. Nor must the singing at our Church services and in the Y.M.C.A. huts be forgotten. Song seems to be the great renewer of hope and courage. It is the joy bringer. And more, it is expression of emotions that find no other voice.

There is no real difference between the songs sung by the officers and those sung by the men. All attend the concerts and all sing on the march. The same songs do for both commanders and commanded, and I have heard the same songs in the men's billets as in the officers' messrooms. How real the songs are to the soldiers is shown by one striking omission. There are no patriotic songs at the Front. Except the National Anthem on formal occasions, I have in eighteen months never heard a single patriotic song—not even ' Land of Hope and Glory.' The reason is simple. The soldiers' patriotism calls for no expression in song. They are expressing it night and day in the endurance of hardship and wounds, and in the risking of their lives. Their hearts are satisfied

with their deeds, and songs become superfluous. In peace-time they sing their love of England, but in war-time they suffer for her and are content. They would never think of singing a patriotic song as they march into battle. It would be painting the lily and gilding refined gold. Are not their deeds songs? Our soldiers, knowing themselves to be the instruments of destiny, make a foil to their deathless deeds by singing some inconsequential and evanescent song such as 'There's something in the sea-side air.' This fine, common instinct of dramatic fitness is worthy of the nation that gave the world Shakespeare, and shows how truly he was a son of the people. On analysis I should say that there are five subjects on which our soldiers sing. First, there are Nonsense Songs, or, if you prefer it, songs of soldier philosophy. They know that no theory will explain the war; it is too big a thing for any sheet of philosophy to cover. It has burst in on our little hum-drum life like a colliding planet. The thing to do is not to evolve a theory as to how the planet got astray, but to clear up the mess it has made. Our soldiers show this sense of the vastness of war-happenings by singing of things having no importance at all, and keeping steadily at their duties. The path of duty is, they find, the only path of sanity. If some bore began to explain to them the Atlantic Ocean these sensible, witty fellows would ask him to go and fetch the Atlantic to them in a mug that they might have ocular demonstrations of his theories. The would-be war philosopher they put on one side. The war is too big for him. He has bitten off more than he can chew. Let him leave his explanation of

the war and lend a hand to bring it to an end. So they sing; with laughing irony, the chorus—

' We 're here because we 're here,
We 're here because we 're here.'

Or,

' While you 've got a lucifer to light your fag,
Smile, boys, that 's the style.
What 's the use of worrying ?
It never was worth while, so
Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag
And smile, smile, smile.'

Another favourite is—

' Oh, there was a little hen and she had a wooden leg,
The best little hen that ever laid an egg,
And she laid more eggs than any hen on the farm,
And another little drink wouldn't do us any harm.'

I have seen them dancing round some old piano,
singing,

' Oh, that fascinating " Bow Bells " glide,
It 's a captivating " Bow Bells " slide.
There 's a rumour that the puma does it now,
Monkeys have taken to it,
Leopards and lions do it.
All the elephants wear dancing shoes,
They keep hopping with the kangaroos ;
Hear them chatter, it 's a matter for some talk ;
Now the Jungle 's got the " Bow Bells " walk.'

The second class of song is the Love Song, more or less serious. The soldiers came out of England singing ' Tipperary,' but they dropped it in France, and the only one on whose lips I have heard it was a little French boy sitting on the tail of a cart. The chorus

alone gave it popularity, for it was the expression, ready to hand, of a long farewell, and with its 'long, long way to go' showed that, like Kitchener, the soldiers were not deceived by hopes of an early peace. Now another song with verses more expressive of their sentiments has taken its place :—

' There 's a long, long trail a-winding
 Into the land of my dreams,
 Where the nightingales are singing
 And a white moon beams ;
 There 's a long, long night of waiting
 'Until my dreams all come true ;
 Till the day when I 'll be going down
 That long, long trail with you.'

The mood changes, and we have—

' Taffy 's got his Jennie in Glamorgan,
 Sandy 's got his Maggie in Dundee,
 While Michael O'Leary thinks of his dearie
 Far across the Irish Sea.
 Billy 's got his Lily up in London,
 So the boys march on with smiles ;
 For every Tommy 's got a girl somewhere
 In the dear old British Isles.'

Again the mood veers round, and we hear—

' Every little while I feel so lonely,
 Every little while I feel so blue,
 I 'm always dreaming, I 'm always scheming,
 Because I want you, and only you.
 Every little while my heart is aching,
 Every little while I miss your smile,
 And all the time I seem to miss you ;
 I want to, want to kiss you,
 Every, every, every little while.'

Here is one that I have heard sung, oh so often, by young officers and men whose voices are now silent in death :—

' If you were the only girl in the world,
 And I were the only boy,
 Nothing else would matter in the world to-day,
 We could go on loving in the same old way ;
 A Garden of Eden just made for two,
 With nothing to mar our joy ;
 I would say such wonderful things to you,
 There would be such wonderful things to do,
 If you were the only girl in the world,
 And I were the only boy.'

Sometimes the imagination would wander into the days that are to be—for some—and they sang :—

' We don't want a lot of flags flying,
 We don't want your big brass bands ;
 We don't want a lot of speechifying,
 And we don't want a lot of waving hands ;
 We don't want a lot of interfering,
 When we 've safely crossed the foam ;
 But we *do* want to find the girls we left behind,
 When we all come marching home.'

Will the girls remember? The words are not without tragedy. How deeply some of the men love may perhaps never be realized by those at home. The longing of their hearts is, at times, almost unbearable. A captain, past middle life, took my arm one day and led me aside. He was, he said, a little anxious about himself, for he was getting into the habit of taking more drink than he was wont to take. He had been taking it when he felt lonely and depressed to ease the longing of his heart. ' I never touch it at home,' he

said; 'the society of my dear little wife is all the stimulant I need. I would give the world to be with her now, just to sit in my chair and watch her at her sewing or knitting. The separation is too much for me and, you know, it has lasted nearly three years now.' I have caught this yearning in more than one of the songs our soldiers sing, but especially in the following lines :—

' Sometimes, between long shadows on the grass,
The little truant waves of sunlight pass ;
My eyes grow dim with tenderness, the while
Thinking I see thee, thinking I see thee smile.

And sometimes in the twilight gloom, apart,
The tall trees whisper, whisper heart to heart ;
From my fond lips the eager answers fall,
Thinking I hear thee, thinking I hear thee call.'

The men's thoughts easily pass from the sweetheart to the mother who bore them, and we have a third class—the Home Song. I have been wakened in the night by men going up to the line, singing 'Keep the Home Fires burning.' It is very thrilling in the dead of night when every singer is within range of the guns. Another great favourite is—

' They built a little garden for the rose,
And they called it Dixie-land ;
They built a summer breeze to keep the snows
Far away from Dixie-land ;
They built the finest place I 've known,
When they built my home sweet home ;
Nothing was forgotten in the land of cotton,
From the clover to the honeycomb,
And then they took an angel from the skies
And they gave her heart to me.

She had a bit of heaven in her eyes
 Just as blue as blue can be ;
 They put some fine spring chickens in the land,
 And taught my Mammy how to use a frying-pan,
 They made it twice as nice as paradise,
 And they called it Dixie-land.'

The men of our Division being Londoners, the following song of ' Leave ' never fails in its appeal :—

' I 'm so delighted, I 'm so excited,
 With my folks I 'm going to be united.
 The train 's departing, 'twill soon be starting ;
 I 'll see my mother, my dad, and my baby brother.
 My ! how I 'll meet them. My ! how I 'll greet them.
 What a happy, happy day.
 Just see that bustle, I 'd better hustle,
 Good-bye—so long—can't stay—

Chorus.

' I 'm on my way back to dear old Shepherd's Bush,
 That 's the spot where I was born ;
 Can't you hear the porter calling,
 Queen's Road, Piccadilly, Marble Arch, and Bond
 Street ?
 Oh, I 'll not hesitate, I 'll reach the gate ;
 Through the crowd I mean to push.
 Find me a seat anywhere—please anywhere,
 Tram, train, tube, 'bus, I don't care—
 For mother and daddy are waiting there—
 In dear old Shepherd's Bush.'

On the eve of a big battle a soldier handed me a letter in which he gave me the addresses of his father and his sweetheart, so that I could write to them if he fell. He said : ' In the last battle one of my brothers was killed and another wounded. If I fall I shall die without regrets and with a heart content ; but it will

go hard with those at home ; and I want you to break the news gently. These are terrible times for those at home.' ' These are terrible times *for those at home.*' That is their constant refrain, and it finds an echo in a song often sung by them :—

' It's a long, long way to my home in Kentucky,
Where the blue-bells grow 'round the old cabin door ;
It's a long, long way, and I'll be mighty lucky
When I see my dear old mammy once more.
So weep no more, my lady,
Just brush those tears away ;
It's a long, long way to my home in Kentucky,
But I'm bound to get there some day.'

The favourite among all their home songs is, I think, the following :—

' There's an old-fashioned house in an old-fashioned street ;
In a quaint little old-fashioned town ;
There's a street where the cobble stones harass the feet,
As it straggles up hill and then down ;
And, though to and fro through the world I must go,
My heart while it beats in my breast,
Where'er I may roam, to that old-fashioned home
Will fly like a bird to its nest.

In that old-fashioned house in that old-fashioned street,
Dwell a dear little old-fashioned pair ;
I can see their two faces so tender and sweet,
And I love every wrinkle that's there.
I love ev'ry mouse in that old-fashioned house
In the street that runs up hill and down ;
Each stone and each stick, ev'ry cobble and brick
In that quaint little old-fashioned town.'

The charm of the army is its comradeship. Our soldiers have left their homes and friends, but they

have found new friends, and some of the friendships have become very precious. They have slept side by side in barn and trench, cooked their rations at the same little wood fire, and stood together in the hour of danger and imminent death. Many of them owe their lives to their comrades. There are few songs that express this wonderful comradeship for them, but there is one that is known and sung throughout the army. It represents the Songs of Comradeship:—

' When you come to the end of a perfect day,
 And you sit alone with your thought,
 While the chimes ring out with a carol gay,
 For the joy that the day has brought ;
 Do you think what the end of a perfect day
 Can mean to a tired heart,
 When the sun goes down with a flaming ray,
 And the dear friends have to part ?

Well, this is the end of a perfect day,
 Near the end of a journey too ;
 But it leaves a thought that is big and strong,
 With a wish that is kind and true.
 For mem'ry has painted this perfect day
 With colours that never fade ;
 And we find at the end of a perfect day
The soul of a friend we 've made.

The fifth class of song is that of the inner life. It is the Religious Hymn. The soldiers are extremely fond of hymns in their services. You cannot give them too many. ' Rock of Ages,' ' Jesu, Lover of my soul,' ' Fight the good fight,' ' There is a green hill,' ' At even ere the sun was set,' ' O God, our help in ages past,' and ' Eternal Father, strong to save,' cannot be chosen

too often. But there are two hymns which have stood out above all others: they are 'Abide with me,' and 'When I survey the wondrous Cross.' There is nothing written by the hand of man which can compete with these in the blessing and strength which they have brought to our soldiers, especially during an offensive when death has cast his shadow over the hearts of all. Any good man would be willing to sacrifice an arm or even life itself to write such a hymn. During the bitterest weeks in the Somme fighting there was scarcely a service in which we did not sing 'When I survey the wondrous Cross.' With its assurance of redemption it gave comfort in the face of death. It also gave for an example, the Supreme Sacrifice. It is said that Watts was not a great poet, but, if not, no one need wish to be. With such a hymn-sheet in his hand he will never be turned out of the Garden of the Immortals. He is as safe as Shakespeare.

I have only given the words of the songs, and that is like showing a landscape without the sky. Half the power and beauty of a song is due to the music. The musician not only interprets a song but adds to its thought and sentiment. A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but a song put to some other tune may lose much of its beauty. In the finest songs the words and music are so perfectly wedded that we may say their marriage was made in heaven and that it is a crime to put them asunder. Some of the songs I have quoted look bare and ungainly as trees in winter, but when the musician has clothed them with music and the singer added to them a touch of his own personality they are fair as trees in summer. Still the

fact remains that none of these songs will live on their own merits. They are not born to immortality. Like the daisies they have their day and pass away to make room for others. It is best so. There is not room in the world for everything to be immortal, and the transient has a work of its own to do. The charm and rare beauty of the English countryside are due to the transience of its flowers and foliage. A little of the evergreen is enough. We tire of the eternal. There are many who find pleasure and inspiration in Longfellow and Whittier to whom Milton and Shakespeare are dumb as the Sphinx. The transient songs which I have quoted here have been meat and drink to our soldiers in the most terrible war ever waged. They may be poor stuff in comparison with our classic songs, but a good appetite can get nourishment out of poor food and grow strong on it. For the purpose in hand these songs have been better than the classics; otherwise they would not have been chosen. There is a time and place for all things. The robin may not be compared with the nightingale, but it is not the less welcome, for it sings when the nightingale is silent. Our soldiers' songs will die, some are already dead, or dying, but they have done their work and justified their existence. They have given pleasure and strength to men as they went out to do immortal deeds, and no wounded soldier, or parched traveller, will think lightly of a cup of water because it perished in the using.

THE WHITE SWAN OF YPRES

FOR three years the storm centre of the British Battle-front has been at Ypres. Every day and night it has been the standing target of thousands of guns. Yet, amid all the havoc and thunder of the artillery, the graceful white form of a swan has been seen gliding over the water of the moat. It never lacked food, for such things in such circumstances take on a moral value, and it was always welcome to a share of the soldiers' rations. In the Battle of Messines—so I had the story first-hand from a lieutenant of artillery whose battery was hidden close by, and who was an eye-witness of the incident—a shell burst near the swan, and it was mortally wounded by a fragment. For three long years it had spread its white wings as gallantly as the white sails of Drake's flagship when he sailed out of Plymouth Sound to singe the beard of the Spanish King. But now its adventurous voyaging was over. Another beautiful and innocent thing had been destroyed by the war and had passed beyond recall. There was no dying swan-song heard on the waters, but all who saw its passing felt that the war had taken on a deeper shade of tragedy. Many a 'white man' has been slain near the spot, but somehow the swan seemed a mystical being and invulnerable. It was a relic of the days of peace, and a sign of the survival of purity and grace amid the horrors and

cruelties of war. It spoke of the sacred things that yet remain and of the beautiful things of the soul upon which war can lay no defiling finger. Now it has gone from the water, and Ypres seems more charred than ever and the war more terrible. The death of the swan reveals against its white wings the dark inhumanity of the present war. It is a war in which the enemy spares nothing and no one. He is more blind and merciless than the Angel of Death which swept over Egypt, for the angel had regard to the blood which the Israelites had sprinkled over the lintels of their doors and he passed by in mercy. To the German Eagle every living creature is legitimate prey. No blood upon the lintel can save the inmate; not even the cross of blood on the hospital tent or ship. Wounded or whole, combatant or non-combatant, the tender flesh of all is torn by the Eagle's beak and talons and its lust is not sated. In Belgium and Serbia it is believed that more women and children perished than men. Things too hideous for words were done publicly in the market squares. Neither age nor sex escaped the fire and sword. The innocent babe was left to suck the breast of its dead mother or was dandled on the point of a bayonet. What resistance can the Belgian Swan make to the German Eagle! It needs must lie torn and bleeding beneath its talons. The British Lion's cubs are safe because of the Lion's claws; but woe to the weak and unarmed. The German Emperor has waded deeper in blood than Macbeth, and has slain the innocent in their sleep. Even the sea is full of women, children, and non-combatant men he has drowned; and their bodies float side by side with those from neutral lands.

His crown is soldered together with innocent blood, and its jewels are the eyes of murdered men and women. The wretched man has made rivers of blood to flow, yet not a drop in them is from his own veins or the veins of his many sons. Napoleon risked his life with his men in every battle, but this man never once. While sending millions to their death he yet consents to live, and protects his life with the anxious care a miser bestows on his gold. Alone among large families in Germany his household is without a casualty. Though a nation be white and innocent as the Belgian swan it will not escape his sword, and he will swoop upon it the more readily because it is unarmed. The swan cannot live where the eagle flies, and one or the other must die.

But the stricken swan of Ypres is not merely the symbol of Belgium and her fate. There are other innocents who have perished or been sorely wounded. The whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain. The neutral nations are suffering with the belligerent, and the lower creatures are suffering with mankind.

Next to seeing wounded men on the roads at the Front, I think the saddest sight is that of dying horses and mules. Last winter they had to stand, with little cover, exposed to the bitter blasts. It was impossible to keep them clean or dry, for the roads were churned into liquid mud, and both mules and drivers were plastered with it from head to foot. To make things worse there was a shortage of fodder; and horses waste away rapidly under ill-feeding. Before the fine weather had given them a chance to recover weight and strength the Battle of Arras began, and every living beast of burden as well as every motor engine was strained to

its utmost. 'The mule is magnificent for war, and our battles have been won as much by mules as men. Haig could rely on one as much as on the other. The mule will eat anything, endure anything, and, when understood and humoured by the driver, will do anything. It works until it falls dead by the roadside. In the spring hundreds died in harness. In fact, few die except in harness. They die facing the foe, dragging rations along shell-swept roads to our men in the trenches. On two miles of road I have counted a dozen dead mules ; and burial parties are sent out to put them out of sight. One night alone I got three dying mules shot. The road was crowded with traffic, and yet it was difficult to find either an officer with a revolver or a transport driver with a rifle. I had to approach scores before I could find a man who had the means to put a mule out of its misery ; and we were within two miles of our firing trench. So rigid is our line of defence that they do not trouble to take arms. Even when I found a rifleman he hesitated to shoot a mule. There is a rule that no horse or mule must be shot without proper authority, and when you consider the enormous cost of one the necessity for the rule is obvious. I had therefore to assure a rifleman that I would take full responsibility for his action. He then loaded up, put the muzzle against the mule's forehead and pulled the trigger. A tremor passed through the poor thing's body, and its troubles were over. It had come all the way from South America to wear itself out carrying food to our men, and it died by the road when its last ounce of strength was spent. The mule knows neither love nor offspring. Apart

from a few gambols in the field, or while tethered to the horse-lines, it knows nothing but work. It is the supreme type of the drudge. It is one of the greatest factors in the war, and yet receives scarcely any recognition, and more of whipping than of praise. Only too often I have seen their poor shell-mangled bodies lying by the road waiting till the battle allowed time for their burial. Yet what could be more innocent of any responsibility for the war? The mule is as innocent as the swan on the moat at Ypres.

Yet the greatest suffering among innocents is not found at the Front at all. It is found at home. At the Front there is suffering of body and mind, but at home there is the suffering of the heart. Every soldier knows that his mother and wife suffer more than he does, and he pities them from his soul. War is a cross on which Woman is crucified. The soldier dies of his wounds in the morning of life, but his wife lingers on in pain through the long garish day until the evening shadows fall. There is no laughter at home such as you hear at the Front, or even in the hospitals. One finds a gaiety among the regiments in France such as is unknown among our homes in England. It is the sunshine of the street as compared with the light in a shaded room. There is a youth and buoyancy at the Front that one misses sadly in England. To a true woman with a son or husband at the Front life becomes a nightmare. To her distorted imagination the most important man in the country is not the Prime Minister but the postman. She cannot get on with her breakfast for listening for his footstep. There is no need for him to knock at the door, she has heard him open the

gate and walk up the gravel path. Her heart is tossed like a bubble on the winds of hope and fear. She finds herself behind the door without knowing how she got there, and her hand trembles as she picks up the letter to see if the address is in 'his' handwriting or an official's. The words 'On His Majesty's Service' are, indeed, to her the composition of a 'printer's devil,' and she dreads them like a witch's incantation. They may be innocent enough, and cover nothing more than belated Commission Papers, but she trembles lest they should be but the fair face of a dark-hearted messenger who is to blot out the light of her life forever. If she goes out shopping and sees a telegraph boy go in the direction of her home, she forgets her purchases and hurries back to see if he is going to knock at her door. The rosy-faced telegraph boy has become a sinister figure, an imp from the nether world. He may be bringing news of her loved one's arrival in England 'on leave,' but so many evil faces of fear and doubt peer through the windows of her heart that she cannot believe in the innocence and good-will of the whistling boy. Her whole world is wrapped up in his little orange-coloured envelope.

The 'boys' at the Front know of the anxiety and suspense that darken their homes, and they do all they can to lighten them. There were times on the Somme when the men were utterly exhausted with fighting and long endurance of the trenches. Water was scarce, and a mild dysentery was coming into evidence. No fire could be lighted to cook food or make hot tea. The ranks had been thinned, and only two officers were left to each company. The weather was bad and the

captured trench uncomfortable. Any moment word might come for another attack. The campaign was near its close, and the work must be completed despite the prevalent exhaustion. The officers were too tired, depressed and pre-occupied to censor hundreds of letters. In front of him each could see a gaping grave. The sun was rapidly 'going west' and leaving them to the cold and dark. Nothing seemed to matter in comparison with that. To hold services was impossible, and I felt that the best I could do was to walk through the trench, chat with the officers and men, and gather up the men's letters to take back and censor in my tent. This gave the officers time to write their own, and an opportunity to post them. Notice the nobility of the men. They were exhausted and depressed. The shadows of death were thick about them, but when I opened their letters I was, with two exceptions out of three or four hundred, in an entirely different atmosphere. It was a sunny atmosphere in which birds were singing. The men said nothing of their suffering, depression, or fears for the future. The black wings of death cast no shadow over their pages. They said they were 'all-right,' 'merry and bright,' and 'soon going back for a long rest.' They told their mothers what kind of cigarettes to send, and gave them details how to make up the next parcel. They talked as if death was out of sight—a fellow with whom they had nothing to do. The officers, of course, censor their own letters, so I did not see how they wrote, but I know. They wrote as the men wrote, and probably with a still lighter touch. Their homes were dark enough with anxiety, and not by any word of theirs would the shadows be deepened. They could

not shield themselves from war's horrors, but they would do their best to shield their white swans at home. They could not keep their womenfolk out of the war, but they would deliver them from its worst horrors. Not till they had fallen would they let the shafts pass them to their mothers and wives ; rather would they gather them to their own breasts. In the supreme tragedy of the world there was a woman standing by the Cross, and the august Sufferer, with dying breath, bade His closest friend take her, when the last beam faded, to his own home and be in his place, a son to her. I know of no scene that better represents the feelings of our soldiers towards those at home.

Their women gave them inspiration and joy in the days of peace, and they still pass before their vision amid the blackened ruins of war, as beautiful and stainless in their purity as the white swan on the moat at Ypres.

THE GLAMOUR OF THE FRONT

THERE is a glamour about the battle Front that, despite fear and foreboding, quickens the pulse and fills the heart with strange and trembling joy. It has lured men from the ends of the earth, and though they may have to leave it on account of sickness, wounds or shattered nerves, the Front still reigns in their imagination and begets from time to time a yearning to return. Like the prairie, the North Pole, or the sea, it calls to its own and they cannot refuse. In England, whether in the Army or out of it, the wine of life is flat and tasteless, but at the Front it runs red and sparkles with fermentation. One day I got a lift in a motor-wagon and sat on a box by the side of one of the servants of the officers' mess at the Aerodrome near by. He was going into Doullens, a market town, to buy food and little luxuries. Captain Ball, V.C., the prince of English flyers, was, up to the time of his death in the air, a member of the mess, and the servant was telling me how comfortable all the officers make their quarters. In a phrase he defined the glamour of the Front. 'One day,' he said, 'when we were helping him to make his room comfortable, Captain Ball burst out into a merry laugh and chuckled, 'We haven't long to live, but we live well while we do live.' That is it. Life is concentrated. Death is near, just round the corner, so they make the most of their time and 'live

well.' It has the same quality as 'leave' at home. Leave is short and uncertain, so we 'live well.' Our friends know it may be the last sight of us, and we know it may be our last sight of them. They are kind and generous to us, and we are the same to them; and so the ten days of 'leave' are just glorious. Ruskin says that the full splendour of the sunset lasts but a second, and that Turner went out early each evening and watched with rapt attention for that one second of supreme splendour and delight. He lived for sunsets, and while others were balancing their accounts, or taking tea, he went out to see the daily miracle. The one second in which he saw God pass by in the glory of the sunset was to him worth all the twenty-four hours. For one second in each day he caught the glamour of earth and heaven, and went back to his untidy studio blind to all but the splendour that he had seen. That second each day was life indeed. The glamour of the Front is like unto it. It is the place where life sets and the darkness of death comes on. The commonest soldier feels it, and with true instinct, not less true because unconscious, he describes death at the Front as 'going West.' It is the presence of death that gives the Front its glamour and life its concentrated joy and fascination. Ball saw it with the intuition of genius when he said to the servant, 'We haven't long to live, but we live well while we do live.' The presence of death gives tone to every expression of life. It makes the Front the kindest place in the world. No one can do too much for you, and there is nothing you would not do for another. Whether you are an officer or a private, you can get a lift on any road in any vehicle that has an

inch of room in it. How often have I seen a dozen tired Tommies clambering up the back of an empty motor-lorry which has stopped, or slowed down, to let them get in. It is one of the merriest sights of the war, and redounds to the credit of human nature. Cigarettes are passed round by those who have, to those who have not, with a generosity that reminds one of nothing so much as that of the early Christians who 'had all things common ; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.' You need never go hungry while others have food. Officers are welcome at every mess they go near, and privates will get food in the servants' kitchen, or may go shares with the men in any billet. It may be a man's own fault that he took no food on the march, and his comrades may tell him so in plain strong language, but they will compel him to share all they have. One wet night on the Somme I was lost in the Happy Valley and could not find my regiment. Seeing a light in a tent I made for it. It was a pioneers' tent, but they invited me to come in out of the storm and to stay the night. They were at supper, and had only a small supply of bully beef, biscuits and strong tea ; but they insisted on my sharing what they had. I was dripping with rain, and they gave me one of their blankets. One of them gave me a box to sleep on and shared his chum's. Some lost privates came in later, wet to the skin, and the pioneers gave them all the eatables left over from supper and shared out their blankets and clothes. It was pure Christianity—whatever creeds they may think they believe. And it is the glamour of the Front. England feels cold and dull after it.

Kindness and comradeship pervade the air in France. You feel that every one is a friend and brother. It will be hard for chaplains to go back to their churches. They have been spoiled too much by kindness. How can they go back to the cold atmosphere of criticism and narrow judgments which prevails in so many churches—that is, unless the war has brought changes there also? And after preaching to dying men who listened as if their destiny depended upon their hearing, how can they go back to pulpits where large numbers in the congregations regard their messages as of less importance than dinner, and as merely supplying material for an exercise in more or less kindly criticism during the intervals between the courses. The glamour of the services at the Front! How the scenes are photographed on the heart! As a congregation sits in a church at home how stolid its features often are! and how dull its eyes! A look round and the preacher's heart sinks within him and his inspiration flies away. Nothing is expected of him, and nothing particularly desired. They have come by force of habit, and not of need. But how the eyes of our soldiers in France glow and burn, and how their features speak, and make the preacher speak in reply! Who could help being eloquent there! Such faces would make the dumb speak. One can see the effect of his words as plainly in their expressions as he can see the effect of the wind on a cornfield. Every emotion, from laughter to alarm, leaps from the heart to the face as the subject touches them at this point of their life and then at that. Their eyes are unforgettable. Months after they come vividly to mind, and one is back again answering the

questions they so silently ask, and seeing the look of content or gratitude that takes the place of the perplexed or troubled expression. The eyes are the windows of the soul, and as I have spoken I have seen the men's souls looking out ; but at home the windows are darkened, and there are no souls behind the panes. The souls within the houses are busy with other matters and will not come to the windows. The preacher feels like an organ-grinder in the street. Those who hear do not heed nor come to the windows of the soul. They think he will be content if they praise his sermon and give to the collection. In France we have no collections at the services, but there is a soul looking out at every window ; and the preacher sings—for his words grow rhythmic—to the listeners of the love of God and of the love of women and children which make sweet this vale of tears, and light man even on his lone way beyond the grave. One Sunday in hospital, when we heard the singing of a hymn in the ward below, a young officer in the next bed turned to me and said : ' Why doesn't the chaplain hold a service for us ? why does he hold them only for the Tommies ? We need them and want them, just as much as the Tommies. We are officers, but we are also men.' I passed the word to the chaplain, and he was a joyful man when in the evening he gave us a service, and the officers of the next ward asked the orderlies to carry them in.

There is the same naturalness and spirit of fellowship between members of various churches. Many lasting friendships have been formed, for example, between Nonconformist and Roman Catholic chaplains, and in some centres Church of England and Nonconformist

chaplains hold a fortnightly meeting for the discussion of religious problems and for social and spiritual fellowship. There has been no change of creed but something greater, a change of spirit. Some of the Church of England chaplains have retained, with their separate organization, a certain exclusiveness, and still cling to the idea that they have some undefined right in the army not held by Roman Catholics and other Non-conformists ; but the great majority have been touched by the common spirit, and have lived and worked in free and happy fellowship with those of the other churches. On my last Sunday in a hospital in France, the senior chaplain, a Canon of the Church of England, invited me to read the lesson at the morning parade service and to administer the wine at Holy Communion. This I did ; and a colonel who was present stayed behind to express to us both the pleasure which had been given to him by the sight of Anglican and Wesleyan churchmen serving together at the Lord's Table. Yet this incident, had it occurred in England, might have raised another Kikuyu controversy, and I hesitate to mention the chaplain's name lest it should get him into trouble. To a chaplain not a little of the glamour of the Front is found in the warm fellowship between men of differing creeds and varying religious temperaments. We have not knocked down our garden walls, but we have taken off the cut glass that had been cemented on them by our fathers ; and now we can lean over and talk to our neighbours. We have already found that our neighbours are human beings, and quite normal. The chief difference between us seems to be that while one has an obsession for roses the other has an obsession

for dahlias. On pansies, sweet peas and chrysanthemums we seem equally keen and exchange plants. A Roman Catholic officer who had been appointed to the Ulster Division told me that though he was received coldly, he had not been with the Division more than a few weeks when every officer in his regiment and every soldier in his company accepted him as cordially as if he were a Protestant. He was from Dublin and they from Belfast, but they let it make no difference, and there sprang up feelings of the warmest loyalty and friendship. His men would fight to the death by his side as readily as around any Ulster officer; and he was just as popular in the officers' mess. When, he said, they passed the Irish Guards or any other Roman Catholic regiment, his regiment would sing some provoking song about 'hanging the Pope with a good strong rope,' and the Dublin regiment would reply with some song equally obnoxious and defiant; but whereas, in peace-time, the songs would have caused a free fight to the accompaniment of bloodshed, now they caused nothing worse than laughter. The songs were just a bit of teasing, such as every regiment likes to regale another with—perhaps, too, a common memory of the dear country they had left behind. The men of Belfast and the men of Dublin have learned to respect and tolerate one another. They know that in a 'scrap' with the enemy they can count on one another to the last drop of blood, for, whether from North or South, the Irish are 'bonnie fighters.' Such are the miracles at the Front. Most of all, perhaps, the glamour of the Front is found in the nobility to which common men rise. An artillery officer told me that he had in his

battery a soldier who seemed utterly worthless. He was dirty in all his ways and unreliable in character. In despair they made him sanitary orderly, that is, the scavenger whose duty it was to remove all refuse. One night the officer wanted a man to go on a perilous errand and there were few men available. At once this youth volunteered. The officer looked at him in amazement and with a new reverence. 'No,' he thought, 'I will not let him go and get killed. I'll go myself.' He told the lad so, and his disappointment was plainly writ on his features. 'But you'll let me come with you, sir?' he replied. 'Why should two risk their lives,' asked the officer, 'when one can do the job?' 'You might get wounded, sir,' was the quick response; and they went together. An Irish officer told me that he had only found one man who seemed bad from top to toe. All the others had some redeeming feature, but this man had none. He used the filthiest language and was dirty in his habits and dress. He was drunken and stole the officers' whisky out of the mess; he was unchaste, and had been in the hospital with venereal disease; and neither as man nor soldier was there anything good to say of him. The regiment was sent to France, and in due time took its place in the trenches; and then appeared in this man something that had never risen to the surface before. Wherever there were wounded and dying men he proved himself to be the noblest man in the regiment. When a man fell in 'No Man's Land' he was over the parapet in the twinkling of an eye to bring him in. No barrage could keep him away from the wounded. It was a sort of passion with him that nothing could restrain. To

save others he risked his life scores of times. In rest billets he relapsed into his evil ways, but in the trenches he was the Great Heart of the regiment, and, though he did not receive it, he earned the V.C. over and over again. There is a glamour at the Front that holds the heart with an irresistible grip. In the light of War's deathly fires the hearts of men are revealed and the black sheep often get their chance. Life is intense and deep, and men are drawn together by a common peril. They find the things that unite, and forget the things that separate.

'We haven't long to live,' said Captain Ball joyfully, 'but we live well while we do live'; and in those words he expressed beyond compare the glamour of the Front. He had found that

'One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.'

THE ROADMAKERS

WE have just marched from one part of the Front to another, and by a roundabout way.

Each morning the quartermaster, Lieutenant E. W. Jackson, and 'the billeting party' went on before, and each evening we slept in a village that was strange to us. Each of the men carried on his back a pack and equipment weighing about eighty or ninety pounds. Through sleet and blizzard and, for the most part, through open, exposed country we continued our march without a day of rest. By the fifth evening we reached the village where we were to have three or four weeks of rest and training before entering the trenches for the Spring Offensive. We had unpacked and were sitting at dinner when a telegram came announcing that all previous plans were cancelled, and that we must take to the road again at dawn. Something unexpected had happened, good or ill, we knew not what, and we had to enter the line in front of Arras. For three days more we marched. Daily the sound of the guns came nearer and the men were tired and footsore. They were also deeply disappointed of the long rest to which they had been looking forward after a winter in the trenches at Neuve Chapelle. Yet they marched cheerily enough. 'It's the War!' they said one to another, and, true to their own philosophy, packed up their troubles in their old kit-bags

and smiled. When any one tottered a bit as if about to fall out by the way they cheered him on by singing 'Old Soldiers never die,' to the tune of the old Sunday-school hymn, 'Kind words can never die.' And an officer would shoulder the man's rifle to the end of the march, or till he felt better. In eight unbroken days of marching we covered ninety-eight miles, and arrived yesterday at a camp of huts within a day's march of the trenches we are to occupy. Here, where our huts stand like islands in a sea of mud, we are, unless suddenly needed, to take a few days' rest.

On the ninety-eight miles of road that we have tramped we passed company after company of British roadmakers. In some parts they were widening the road, and in other parts repairing it. The roads of north-eastern France are handed over to our care as completely as if they were in England. Our roadmakers are everywhere, and as we pass they stand, pick or shovel in hand, to salute the colonel, and shout some humorous remark to the laughing riflemen—only to get back as much as they give.

This morning I visited the neighbouring village to arrange a service for Sunday. The roads are hopeless for bicycles at this time of the year, so I fell back on Adam's method of getting about. (It is remarkable how primeval we become at the Front both in action and thought.) The road to the village was torn and broken and 'thaw precautions' were being observed. Everywhere it was ankle-deep in mud and, in the holes, knee-deep. Innumerable motor-wagons have crushed it beneath their ponderous weight, and my feet had need of my eyes to guide them. In skirting the

holes and rough places I added quite a mile to the journey.

It was annoying to get along so slowly, and I called the road 'rotten,' and blamed the War for its destructive work. Then I saw that I had been unjust in judgment. The War had constructed more than it had destroyed. The road had been a little unmetalled country lane, but the soldiers had made it wide as Fleet Street, and it was bearing a mightier traffic night and day. The little road with its mean perfections and imperfections had gone, and the large road with big faults and big virtues had come. This soldiers' road has faults the farmers' road knew not, but then it has burdens and duties unknown before, and it has had no time to prepare for them. Like our boy-officers, who are bearing grown men's burdens of responsibility, and bearing them well, the road has had no time to harden. To strengthen itself for its duties it eats up stones as a giant eats up food. I had no right to look for the smoothness of Oxford Street or the Strand. Such are the work of centuries, but this of days. They have grown with their burdens, but this has had vast burdens thrown upon it suddenly and while it was immature. Oxford Street and Fleet Street are the roads of peace, and laden with wealth and luxury, law and literature—things that can wait. But on this road of the soldiers nothing is allowed except on matters of life and death. It is the road of war, and there is a terrible urgency about it. Over it pass ammunition to the guns, rations to the soldiers in the trenches, and ambulances bearing back the wounded to the hospital. Whatever its condition the work must be done, and

there is no room for a halting prudence or the pride of appearance. Rough though it is and muddy, over it is passing, for all who have eyes to see, a new and better civilization and a wider liberty. I had grumbled at the worn-out road when I ought to have praised it. I was as an ingrate who finds fault with his father's hands because they are rough with toil.

It was a group of soldier roadmakers who brought me to mysenses. They were making a new road through the fields, and it branched off from the one I was on. I saw its crude beginning and considered the burdens it would soon have to bear. As I stood watching these English roadmakers my mind wandered down the avenues of time, and I saw the Roman soldiers building their immortal roads through England. They were joining town to town and country to country. They were introducing the people of the North to those of the South, and bringing the East into fellowship with the West. I saw come along their roads the Union of all England, followed at some distance by the Union of England, Scotland and Wales; and I regretted that there was no foundation on which they could build a road to Ireland. I saw also on those soldier-built roads Christianity and Civilization marching, and in the villages and towns by the wayside they found a home whence they have sent out missionaries and teachers to the ends of the earth.

'The captains and the kings depart.' The Roman Empire is no more, but the Roman roads remain. They direct our modern English life and business with an inevitability the Roman soldiers never exercised. In two thousand years the British Empire may have fallen

apart and become a thing of the past ; but the roads she has built in France these two and a half years will abide forever and be a perpetual blessing, for, of things made by hands, there is, after the Church and the home, nothing more sacred than the road. The roadmaker does more for the brotherhood of man and the federation of the world than the most eloquent orator. The roadmaker has his dreams and visions as well as the poet, and he expresses them in broken stones. He uses stones as artists use colours and orators words. He touches them—transient as they are—with immortality. A little of his soul sticks to each stone he uses, and though the stone perishes the road remains. His body may perish more quickly than the stones and be laid in some quiet churchyard by the wayside, but his soul will never utterly forsake the road he helped to make. In man's nature and in all his works there is a strange blending of the temporal and the eternal, and in nothing is it more marked than in the roads he builds.

The roadmaker is the pioneer among men, and without him there would be neither artist nor orator. He goes before civilization as John the Baptist went before Christ, and he is as rough and elemental. Hard as his own stones, without him mankind would have remained savage and suspicious as beasts of prey ; and art, science and literature would have had no beginning. His road may begin in war, but it ends in peace.

The pioneers I saw roadmaking were, for the greater part, over military age, and such as I have seen often leaning heavily on the bar of some miserable public

house. In those days they seemed of the earth earthy, and the stars that lure to high thoughts and noble endeavours seemed to shine on them in vain. But one never knows what is passing in the heart of another. Of all things human nature is the most mysterious and deceptive. God seems to play at hide and seek with men. He hides pearls in oysters lying in the ooze of the sea; and gold under the everlasting snows of the Arctic regions. Diamonds He buries deep down in the dirt beneath the African veldt. He places Christ in a carpenter's cottage, Joan of Arc in a peasant's dwelling, Lincoln in a settler's cabin, and Burns in a crude cottar's house built by his father's own hands. He hides generous impulses and heroic traits in types of men that in our mean imaginations we can only associate with the sawdust-sprinkled beer-house. Only when war or pestilence has kindled its fierce and lurid flames do we find the hidden nobility that God has stored away in strange places—places often as foul and unlikely as those where a miser stores his gold. When Diogenes (was not that the quaint fellow's name?) went about with a candle in search of an honest man, did he think to look in the taverns and slums? I fancy not. Not Diogenes' candle but Christ, the 'Light of the World,' was needed to reveal the treasure God has hidden in men. Christ alone knew where His Father had hidden His wealth and could guide us to it. In this time of peril, when every man with any nobility in him is needed to stand in the deadly breach and with body and soul hold back the brutality and tyranny that would enslave the world, we have, like the woman in the parable, lit a candle and searched every corner

of our kingdom diligently. In the dust of unswept corners we have found many a silver coin that, but for our exceeding need, would have remained hidden. To me the wealth and wonder of the War have been found in its sweepings. Time and again we have found those who were lost, and a new happiness has come into life. To the end of my days I shall walk the earth with reverent feet. I did not know men were so great. I have looked at life without seeing the gold through the dust, and have been no better than Kaffir children playing at marbles with diamonds and unaware of their value. I have gone among my fellows with blind eyes, and have rushed in where angels fear to tread. Life at the Front has made me feel mean among mankind. My comrades have been so great. In days long past I have trodden on the hem of Christ's garment without knowing it. I have not seen its jewels because I, and others, have so often trodden it in the mire. Yet, through the mire of slum and tavern the jewels have emerged pearl-white and ruby-red. And I feel that I owe to a large part of mankind an apology for having been so blind, callous and superficial before the War. But for the agony and bloody sweat in which I have seen my fellows I should never have known them for what they are, and the darkness of death would have covered me before I had realized what made the death of Christ worth while and the sufferings of all the martyrs. Now there is a new light upon my path, and I shall see an angel's features through the dirt on a slum child's face. Words of Christ that once lay in the shadow now stand out clearly, for whenever we get below the surface of life we come to *Him*. He is there before us

and awaiting our coming. I also understand somewhat the meaning of the words which the unemployed scrawled upon their banner before the War—'Damn your charity. Give us work.' It was a deep and true saying and taught them by a stern teacher. When the War came we *did* 'damn our charity!' and gave them 'work.' Many a man got his first chance of doing a 'man's job,' and rose to the full height of his manhood. Many who seemed idle and drunken were touched in their finer parts. They saw their country's need, and though their country had done little to merit their gratitude, they responded to her call before some of the more prudent and sober. Those who were young went out to fight, and every officer can tell stories about their behaviour in the hours of danger and suffering which bring tears to the eyes and penitence to the heart. Those above military age went out to make roads over which their younger brothers and sons could march, and get food, ammunition, or an ambulance, according to their needs. Among the group of middle-aged roadmakers that I saw this morning there were, I doubt not, some who had been counted wastrels, and who had made but a poor show of life. Now they had got 'work' that made them feel that they were men and not mendicants, and they were 'making good.'

While I watched them a lark rose from the neighbouring field and sang over them a song of the coming Spring. It is the first lark I have heard this year, and I was glad it mingled its notes with the sounds of the roadmakers' shovels. Nature is not so indifferent to human struggles as it sometimes seems. The man who stands steadfastly

by the right and true and bids tyranny and wrong give place will find, at last, that he is in league with the stones of the field and the birds of the air, and that the stars in their courses fight for him. The roadmaker and the lark are born friends. Both are heralds of a coming gladness, and while one works the other sings. True work and pure song are never far apart. They are both born of hope and seek to body forth the immortal. A man works while he has faith. Would he sow if he did not believe the promise made under the rainbow, that seedtime and harvest shall never fail? Or could he sing with despair choking his heart? Yet he can sing with death choking it. In the very act of dying Wesley sang the hymn, 'I'll praise my Maker while I've breath.' He sang because of the hope of immortality. He was not turning his face to the blank wall of death and oblivion but to the opening gate of a fuller life. He was soaring sunwards like the lark, and soaring sang,

'And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past.'

Joy can sing and Sorrow can sing, but Despair is dumb. It has not even a cry, for a cry is a call for help, as every mother knows, and Despair knows no helper. Even the saddest song has hope in it, as the dreariest desert has a well. The loved one is dead, but the love lives on and whispers of a trysting-place beyond this bourne of time, where loved and lover will meet again. The patriot's life may be pouring from a dozen wounds on the muddy field of battle, but his fast emptying

heart is singing with each heavy beat, 'Who dies if England live?'

Trail-blazers are not always religious men—often they are wild, reckless fellows whom few would allow a place in the kingdom of God—but is not their work religious in its final upshot? Do they not, however unconsciously, 'prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.' Close on their heels go the missionaries, urged on faster by the pure love of souls than the trader by love of lucre. The greatest among the roadmakers was a missionary himself—David Livingstone. And for such an one the name of Living-stone is perfect. It has the touch of destiny. Through swamp and forest he went where white feet had never trod, and blazed a trail for the messengers of Christ, until, worn out with fever and hardship, he fell asleep at his prayers and woke no more to toil and suffering.

But while the roadmaker bestows benefits on us he also lays obligations, for there can be no enlargement of privilege without a corresponding increase of responsibility. The roads our soldiers are making here in France will be good for trade. They will open up the country as did the military roads of Napoleon and Cæsar; but they will also increase the rates and taxes if they are to be maintained, and the niggardly and unimaginative may grumble, and pay reluctantly. Livingstone placed a new obligation on the Church when he opened up Africa. The Church could not ignore the road he had made and the people at the other end of it. She was bound to send along it 'the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings.' And the soldiers

around me while they are, at high cost to themselves, buying for posterity great benefits, are also laying upon posterity great obligations. Posterity must hold and enlarge the liberties won for them, and prove worthy of their citizenship by resisting tyranny 'even unto blood.' We are here because our fathers were heroes and lovers of liberty. Had they been cowards and slaves there would have been no war for us. England would have been as Luxemburg. As we follow our fathers, our sons must be ready to follow us. The present springs out of the past, and the future will spring out of the present. Inheritance implies defence on the part of the inheritors. The very names they give to their roads show that our soldiers have grasped this fact. The cold canvas hut in which I am writing is officially described as No. 1 Hut, *Oxford Street*. A little farther off and running parallel with it is *Cambridge Road*. There is also an *Eton Road*, *Harrow Road*, and *Marlborough Road*. The students of these universities and schools are out here to defend what these institutions have through the hoary centuries stood for. They are out to preserve the English conception of Liberty and Fair-play, and to build roads along which it can travel, to all peoples who desire it, unmolested by attacks from either tyrants or anarchists.

From the beginning of the War the idea of a road has taken hold of the imagination of our soldiers. The first divisions came out singing, 'It's a long, long way to Tipperary, but my heart's right there.' Now the popular song is, 'There's a long, long trail a-winding into the land of my dreams.' They are making a road

of Liberty along which all nations may pass to universal peace and brotherhood, and where the weak will be as safe from oppression as the strong. 'It's a long, long way to go,' but they have seen the City of God on the horizon, and will either reach it or die on the way to it. They have made up their minds that never again shall the shadow of the Kaiser's mailed fist or any other tyrant's fall across their path. They never sing of war. They hate war. It is a brutal necessity forced on them by the ambition of a tyrant. Their songs are all of peace and none of war. Of the future and not the present they sing—

'Tiddley iddley ighty,
Hurry me home to Blighty;
Blighty is the place for me.'

Whether they sing with levity or seriousness (and levity of manner often veils their seriousness of feeling), it is of a future of peace and goodwill they sing. To them the war is a hard road leading to a better life for mankind. It is to them what the desert was to the Israelites when they left the bondage of Egypt for the liberty of the Land of Promise. Therefore they must tread it without faltering even as Christ trod the way of the Cross. 'There's a long, long trail a-winding into the Land of their dreams,' and they will not lose faith in their dreams, however wearisome the way. They will march breast forward—

'On to the bound of the waste,
On to the city of God.'

Elderly navvies and labourers have come to smooth the roads for them, and nurses are tending those who

have fallen broken by the way ; while across the
sundering sea are mothers and wives whose prayers
make flowers spring up at their feet and blossoms
break out on every tree that fringes their path
of pain.

EASTER SUNDAY, 1917

NIGHT and day for a week the fearful bombardment continued. Our guns were everywhere, and belching forth without intermission. Dumps of shells were almost as common as sheaves in a corn-field, and processions of ammunition wagons piled the shells up faster than the gorging guns could take them. The noise was something beyond imagination. It was as though all the devils in hell had come out to a demoniac feast that was to celebrate the end of the world. We were living, two transport officers and I, in an empty farm-house that, some time before we came in, had been a target for direct hits. One shell had gone through the roof, and another through the gable wall. The windows had been shattered, and the garden and fields were pitted with shell holes. Our first care had been to look at the cellar, but we had decided, if things became too hot, to make for the open fields. We all slept in the same room, and were at times wakened up by 'an arrival' and passed an opinion as to its distance. If, for a time, none came nearer, we turned over and went to sleep again, for a man must sleep even though it be on the edge of a volcano. One morning the servants found a shell noscap beneath the window; just that and nothing more. The week was wearing on. Another morning some of the 7th Middlesex Regiment were in the baths in the village over the way,

and a company of the London Scottish was passing by. Two shells fell in the road. The bathers scampered out of the bath and ran naked here and there for shelter; and the Scottish 'scattered'; but some forty-five soldiers, mostly killed, lay in the road dead or wounded. In the dead of night a party of machine gunners, just returned from the firing trench, stood outside their billet in our village Square debating if they should make a cup of tea before turning in to sleep. A shell decided the matter, and, next morning, I laid two of them to rest in the little cemetery, and the others stood by as mourners. The week of terror reached its crisis on the Sunday—an Easter Sunday never to be forgotten. The infantry of the Brigade had been away to a camp, beyond range, for a week's rest. They had now returned ready for the battle. Three of the regiments had taken up their positions in the reserve trenches, but my own regiment was quartered in the fatal village. The day dawned as fair as that on which Christ rose from the dead, but its smiles were the smiles of a deceiver. The Germans had willed the destruction of the village, a sort of devil's hail and farewell before being driven back at the points of bayonets. We were awakened by the firing of machine guns over our heads and rushed to the door to see a fight in the air. High up in the blue sky two aeroplanes circled about for positions of vantage, and then rushed at one another like hawks in mortal combat. A silence followed. Then the German machine rose and made off towards the battle line, but fell to a shot of our gunners before it could reach safety. The English machine with its petrol-tank on fire was planing down to the earth.

Down and down an invisible spiral staircase it seemed to rush, while the golden fire burnt at its vitals, and a trailing cloud of smoke marked its path of doom. Breathlessly we watched its descent. It was under perfect control, but its path to the ground was too long and spiral, and the faster it rushed through the air the greater the draught became and the more madly the flames leapt up. Every second was precious, and the certainty of its doom made us sick. We saw the body of the observer fall out, and still the flaming machine pursued its course. Then the wings fell away and twirled to the ground like feathers, and the engine and pilot dropped like a stone. When the bodies were picked up it was found that the observer had been shot through the head, and that the pilot, with his dead comrade behind him, had worked the wheel until the furious encroaching flame had swept over him and robbed him of life.

Shells were now dropping in the village every few minutes. Our farm-house was on the right wing, and we stood watching the bombardment. With each burst there rose a cloud of black smoke and red brick dust, and we knew that another cottage was destroyed. Then the shells began to creep round to the right, as if the enemy were feeling for the bridge over which the ammunition wagons were passing. On one side of the little bridge was a white bell-tent, and we watched the shells dropping within a few feet of it without destroying it. Between the tent and our street lay a stagnant pool, and we saw about a dozen shells fall in its water. The range was lengthening, and it seemed as if some invisible octopus were stretching out its feelers towards

us. A shell smashed against the farm-house at the bottom of our street. The deadly thing was coming nearer. Some of our sergeants were in a farm-house a few doors away, and, hearing a shell fall in the field between them and the pool, they came to the decision that the moment had come 'to scatter,' but they were too late. It would have been better had they stayed indoors. As they rushed out a shell burst over the yard; three of them fell to the ground dead, and three more were blown back into the house by the force of the explosion. The coping stone of the outhouse where the shell burst was blown away, and three ragged seams were scored on the green doorway of the yard outside which the three lads lay dead. One of them had, ten days before, shown me to my billet thirty yards farther up. He acted as interpreter to the regiment, and as he had never to go into the line we thought that he was one of those who would see the end of the war. Yet there he lay. But the worst calamity of the day was yet to befall. Some fifteen or sixteen ammunition wagons, unable to get through the village, had halted in the Square—'Wipers Square' it had been named. Each wagon was loaded with 9·2 shells. An enemy shot fell on a wagon and set it on fire; then the village became like unto Sodom and Gomorrah on their day of doom. One or two drivers bravely stuck to their wagons and got them out, but the rest of the wagons were lost. The scene that followed is indescribable. Doré could not paint such horrors. The wagons all caught fire and their loads of shells began to explode. We stood out in the fields and watched the conflagration, and all the time the Germans continued to shell

the village. The large village hall and the houses on each side of the Square were utterly destroyed. Great explosions sent fragments of wagons and houses sky high, and showers of missiles fell even where we stood. The fore part of one wagon was blown on to the roof of a house. Houses caught fire and blazed all afternoon. Some machine gunners joined us and told us how, when choking smoke began to penetrate into their cellar they had to rush through the Square with its bursting shells to preserve their lives. A German shell burst in a billet where a platoon of our men were sheltering in the cellar, and those who were not killed by the shell were crushed to death by the fall of the house. Another shell hit the roof of the house in the cellar of which was our advanced dressing-station for the morrow's battle. Two R.A.M.C. orderlies who happened to be in the street were killed, and the colonel was knocked down. In the cellars of almost every house were soldiers or civilians, and all day the ammunition wagons continued burning; shell after shell getting red hot and exploding. All day the German bombardment continued and, amid a terrific din, our own gunners returned a score or more for every shell received. By the bridge another long line of loaded ammunition wagons stood for two hours, and though shells were bursting close by not one hit the wagons. The drivers stood by them and, as soon as the road was cleared, got them away to the guns. Yet, while the Square was burning and the German shells falling, hundreds of men from the Q.V.R., L.R.B., and 2nd London regiments entered the village from the right, and crossed the bridge to stack their packs so as to be

ready for the coming battle. They walked in single file and with wide gaps between, but not a man ran or quickened his pace. My blood tingled with pride at their courage and anger at their carelessness. What *would* make a British soldier run? An officer was walking near the pool. A shell fell near enough for fragments to kill him, but he merely looked round, stopped to light a cigarette, and walked leisurely on as if nothing had happened. Three men stood with their backs against a small building near the bridge as if sheltering from the rain. Several shells fell uncomfortably near, so, concluding that the rain had changed its direction, they moved round the corner. And it was not till more shells had fallen near them that they condescended to move away altogether. Yet this was not bravado, for, so far as they knew, no one was watching them. It was due to a certain dignity peculiar to our fighting man. He is too proud to acknowledge defeat. He is a *man*, and whether any one is watching or not, he is not going to run away from a shell. Hundreds of lives must have been lost through this stubborn pride, but, on the other hand, thousands of lives must have been saved by it, for it makes the British Army absolutely proof against panic, and nothing is so fatal in war as panic. In eighteen months on the Front I have never seen or heard of a single case of panic either with many or few. Our soldiers are always masters of themselves. They have the coolness to judge what is the wisest thing to do in the circumstances, and they have the nerve to carry it out. They run unnecessary risks through pride but never through panic. All day on the bridge

a military policeman stood at his post of duty. Like Vesuvius of old the exploding shells in the Square sent up their deadly eruption, and like the Roman sentry at Pompeii he stood at his post. As he stood there I saw a young Frenchwoman leave her house and pass him on the bridge. She was leaving the village for a safer place, but she seemed quite composed and carried a basket on her left arm. While our village was being destroyed we were startled by a tremendous explosion a few miles away; and, looking to our left, we saw a huge tongue of flame leap up to the sky, followed by a wonderful pillar of smoke, which stood rigid for some moments like a monster tower of Babel that reached to heaven. Evidently a dump of cordite had been fired by an enemy shell. Farther off still, another dump was on fire. Time and again bright flames leapt from the ground like noble but immature desires from the heart—only to be smothered again by dense curling masses of smoke. It seemed as if our whole front was on fire, and news came to us that our main road of communication had been heavily shelled and was now strewn with dead horses and men. Before the battle of the Somme there were no signs and portents so terrible as these. It was evident that the enemy knew what was in store for him on the morrow, and was preparing against it, but if the prelude was so magnificent in its terror what would the battle be? Imagination staggered under the contemplation. By four o'clock the bombardment was almost at an end, and nearly all the shells in the Square had exploded. The soldiers began to creep out of the cellars. On passing through the Square we were amazed at the sight. In

fact the transport officer passed through at my side without recognising the place. At the entrance was a team of six dead mules lying prone on the ground and terribly torn. Two rows of houses had disappeared and left mere heaps of stones in their places. The pavement was torn up, and the wrecks of the ammunition wagons lay scattered about. Two houses on our left were still burning. Our colonel and adjutant we found by the side of the stream. They had been in a cellar near the Square all day, but, fortunately, they were little the worse for the experience. They were giving orders for the assembling of the scattered regiment. Civilians by this time were leaving the cellars, and with armfuls of household goods were hastening from the village. To them it seemed the end of all things—the day of doom. Some of them had slight wounds, and as they passed us they cried mournfully, 'Finis, Messieurs, Finis.' All was lost. This exodus of the despairing civilians was the saddest sight of the day. By sunset the regiment had been gathered together—all except the wounded, who had been sent to the main dressing-station, and the dead, who had been placed side by side covered with blankets. Most of our officers and men had lost all their belongings, but in the twilight they marched out of the village and took their places in the reserve trenches near the other battalions. These had suffered no losses. They had been saved the long day's agony. Early the next morning the battle was to begin, but the Westminsters knew that no worse experience could await them than that through which they had already passed. At dawn I buried, near the ruined church, the bodies

of the sergeants who had been killed a few doors from us ; and on the following day I laid to rest, side by side in one long grave, two drivers who had died at their posts in the Square, and an officer and twenty men belonging to the 1st Queen's Westminster Rifles. These had all perished in the destruction of the village, and on the eve of victory.

‘NOW THE DAY IS OVER’

ACHICOURT is a little village about a mile out of Arras. It has two churches, one Roman Catholic and the other Lutheran. The former church has been utterly destroyed by German shells and will have to be rebuilt from the foundations. The Lutheran church was less prominently placed, and its four walls are still standing. Its humility has saved it, but, as by fire. All its windows are gone, and its walls are torn and scarred by fragments of shells. Most of its slates have been destroyed and the rain pours through the roof. But, on dry days, and until the Battle of Arras, it was a beloved little place for services. It stood, however, at a corner of the village Square, and the Square was destroyed by hundreds of exploding shells on Easter Sunday. As I passed it in the afternoon of that day, and saw how it had suffered, my heart grew sad within me. Often it had sheltered us at worship, and many of our most sacred memories will cling for ever like ivy to its walls. The door was smashed in, and the vestibule was torn into strips as by lightning. The pews were strewn on the floor with their backs broken ; and even the frames of the windows had been blown out. There was a little harmonium that we had used with our hymns, and it lay mutilated on the floor like a slaughtered child. The floor was white with plaster as when a sharp frost has brought low the

cherry blossom. Never again, I thought, should I gather my men for worship within its humble, hospitable walls. One more of the beautiful and sacred things of life had perished in this all-devouring war. Only the fields remained, and there all my future services must be held. But 'fears may be liars,' and so mine proved. I had reckoned without the British soldier—that master of fate whose head 'beneath the bludgeonings of chance is bloody but unbowed.' In a week he had cleared the Square of its dead—mules and men—filled in its craters, and cleared away the debris that blocked the roads. He was even removing the fallen houses to mend the roads with their bricks and stones; and he had thrown together for salvage all the scraps of iron. There I found lying side by side the burned tin soldiers of the children; officers' revolvers which, being loaded, had exploded in the heat; bayonets and rifle barrels of the men; and broken sewing machines of the women. He had taken in hand, too, the little church. Sacking was spread across the windows; the remnants of the harmonium were carefully placed under the pulpit, where they lie like the body of a saint beneath the altar; and the floor was swept of its fallen plaster. The pews were repaired and placed in order again; and a new door was made. Even wood was brought for a new vestibule. The wood was rough and unpainted—Tommy had to use what he could get—but it served. The twisted railings were drawn away from the entrance, and, on the following Sunday, we were back in our old sanctuary. We felt that it was more sacred than ever. These are the deeds of Tommy that make us love him so much, and these are the acts

of kindness and common sense that make us admire our commanders. Our officers and men have the heart of a lion in battle and the gentleness of a lamb when it is over. Whatever their circumstances, they cannot cease to be gentlemen, nor forget the fathers that begat them.

As a drop of water may reflect the whole sky, so each day at the Front interprets the England of a thousand years. We realize daily that our Empire is not the expression of an accident but of a character. Let him who doubts the future of England come hither. Let him see the past through the present, and the future through both. Tommy's eyes are the crystal gazing-glasses in which we may discern the future. Tommy is living history and the prophecy of the future made flesh. The pessimists have not seen Tommy here, and that is why they are what they are. 'Age cannot wither, nor custom stale' his infinite freshness and resource. He is a sword that the rust of time cannot corrode nor the might of an enemy break, and he will be found flashing wherever there are wrongs to right and weak to be defended. On Easter Sunday he was calmly enduring the horror of the German bombardment and the explosions of his own dump of shells. On Easter Monday he was driving the Germans at the point of his bayonet, or accepting their surrender at the doors of their deep dug-outs. On Easter Tuesday and Wednesday he was repairing a little French chapel for worship. Take him which day you will and match him if you can. To me he is the king of men, and his genius for affairs is no more to be explained than that of Shakespeare, Burns or Keats for poetry.

After some weeks of fighting we had come to our last Sunday in Achicourt, and were gathered for the evening service. The chapel was jammed with officers and men, but not all my flock were there. Rifleman Gibson was absent. He was carrying 'his beloved Lewis gun' in an attack when a bullet struck him, and he died with a smile on his face, as his comrades report. Before going into battle he had given me his father's address, and thanked me for the spiritual help he had received at the services. It was his farewell to me, and his father now has the pencilled words. And Rifleman Stone was absent too. He was but a boy, and beautiful with youth and goodness. His chums loved him as David loved Jonathan, with a love passing the love of women. Every day, they told me in their grief, he knelt in the trench to say his prayers and to read his Bible. One night after his prayers he laid him down and slept. He had often sung the evening hymn—

' Jesus protects ; my fears, begone !
 What can the Rock of Ages move ?
 Safe in Thy arms I lay me down,
 Thy everlasting arms of love.

While Thou art intimately nigh,
 Who shall violate my rest ?
 Sin, earth, and hell I now defy ;
 I lean upon my Saviour's breast.

Me for Thine own Thou lov'st to take,
 In time and in eternity,
 Thou never, never wilt forsake
 A helpless soul that trusts in Thee.'

As he slept God took him from the misery of the world—took him without waking him. His broken-hearted comrades gathered together his broken body, and a friend, a Congregational minister, who, though over military age, was serving in the ranks, read the burial service over him. Lance-corporal Gilbert James was missing too—he whom I had known lose his breakfast to attend a service in a cold, dirty old barn. And many others were absent, whose departure to the land beyond our mortal reach was to us like the putting out of stars. We were leaving the Arras Front, and we sang a hymn for those who had taken our places :—

' O Lord of Hosts, Whose mighty arm
In safety keeps 'mid war's alarm,
Protect our comrades at the Front
Who bear of war the bitter brunt ;
 And in the hour of danger spread
 Thy sheltering wings above each head.

In battle's harsh and dreadful hour,
Make bare Thine arm of sovereign power
And fight for them who fight for Thee,
And give to justice, victory.
 O in the hour of danger spread
 Thy sheltering wings above each head.

If by the way they wounded lie,
O listen to their plaintive cry ;
And rest them on Thy loving breast,
O Thou on Whom the cross was pressed ;
 And in the hour of danger shed
 Thy glorious radiance o'er each head.

When pestilence at noonday wastes,
 And death in triumph onward hastes,
 O Saviour Christ, remember Nain,
 And give us our beloved again,
 In every ward of sickness tread;
 And lay Thy hand upon each head.

O Friend and Comforter divine,
 Who makest light at midnight shine,
 Give consolation to the sad
 Who in the days of peace were glad ;
 And in the hour of sorrow spread
 Thy wings above each drooping head.

Amen.'

I had to find a new voice to start it, for our little harmonium had been destroyed by a shell, and our precentor, Sergeant G. C. Cordery, was lying in a grave beside his Medical Aid Post at Guemappe. When, on Good Friday, we had sung the hymn before the regiment returned from rest billets to the line, he had started the tune. He loved music second only to risking his life for the wounded. In one of his letters given me to censor, he had written, 'How nice it will be to be back in my old place in the choir.' But he was too brave to go back. His path was onward and upward, and his place was in the heavenly choir. This fate had seemed discernible in his large, tender blue eyes. There was an expression in his eyes as if he had seen 'the land that is very far off.' I felt that he was chosen as a sacrifice—that the seal of God was on his forehead. Still we must sing, though his voice was silent. We sang several hymns, one after another. Hymns seemed all our spirits needed. What need

for a sermon was there when we had hymns ? We left the rag-time type and sang the real deep hymns that come from men's hearts, and ever after are taken up by their fellows to express their deepest aspirations and experiences. The ruined chapel vibrated with music, and men, I am told, stood in the street to listen while ‘ Jesus, Lover of my soul,’ ‘ Rock of Ages,’ ‘ When I survey the wondrous Cross,’ and ‘ The sands of time are sinking ’ told of the faith and love that lift up the heart. We sang also ‘ Abide with me.’ After hearing us sing it one night, a Roman Catholic officer in the regiment, a Canadian, and one of the bravest, most beloved, and most religious men that ever walked, told me that he was a great-grandson of the author. He is in hospital now with severe wounds, but his men were present. ‘ Couldn't we take up a collection for the repair of the chapel when peace comes ? ’ whispered a rifleman ; ‘ it would be a sort of thanksgiving for the good times we have had in it, and for the kindness of the congregation in giving us the use of it so freely.’ I put the suggestion to the men, and they voted for it with enthusiasm. Two of them went round with their caps, and out of their shallow purses the big-hearted fellows gave over 100 francs. In the name of the men I presented the full caps to a lady of the congregation who was present, and she was moved to tears. I then spoke to the men of the promise given to Noah after the world's first great trouble. ‘ And God said, I do set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud.’ ‘ God,’ I said,

' has made a covenant with man, for man is His son and subject'; and there must be an understanding between them if there is to be peace and happiness. Man must know God's will or he will grieve Him, and there will be discord and pain. Also, man must know God's intentions concerning him, and something of His ways, or he will live in fear and dread of the Almighty One in whose power he lies. There were no books or parchment in the first days, so God took the sky for His parchment, and, dipping His fingers in the most lovely of colours, wrote out His covenant with man. He spread it out between earth and heaven so that man might look up and see it without obstruction, and so that He Himself might look down on it and remember His agreement. 'The rainbow,' He said, 'shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant.'

When you draw up a covenant with a neighbour, you look well at it and then give it to your attorney, who puts it away in the darkness of the safe. But it is taken out at intervals for fresh examination. And the rainbow-covenant was put away behind the clouds, to be brought out again from time to time to bring comfort and strength to man by its appearance. The rainbow is only half seen by man. The lower half of its circle is lost in the earth. It exists, but unseen. And the full circle of God's beautiful covenant with man has never appeared to our eyes. A full half is lost in the unapprehending darkness of man's mind. The full purpose of God is not realized. His plans are too vast and glorious for the intellect or imagination to span; but half the rainbow is seen, and it is enough.

Seeing half we can take the rest on trust. In the rainbow-covenant we are assured that we shall never be given darkness without light, winter without summer, seedtime without harvest, death without birth, sorrow without joy, or a thick cloud without a rainbow. He binds Himself not to give evil without good or to bring tears without laughter. ' I do set My rainbow in the cloud ; and it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud.'

A rainbow is made up of rain and sunshine, and life is woven of the same stuff—tears and laughter. The most glorious sunshine is incapable of a rainbow without the co-operation of the dark trailing clouds ; and it is impossible for the human character to reach its ripest maturity and beauty on joy alone. Sorrow is as beneficent and necessary as joy. There are untutored natives who dread the rainbow. They believe that it is a serpent that rises out of the pools to devour men ; and there are men of wavering faith in cultured lands who dread adversity no less. They do not believe that *God* ' brings the *cloud*.' They look at the sunshine but ignore the clouds. They have eyes for the pleasant only. And that way blindness lies. For we cannot see God as He is till we realize that He, who cared to make the rose, *dared* to make the tiger. On the other hand, there are unbelieving men who see only the cloud and are blind to the sunshine. To them life is one long tragedy. They regard man as a mere cork in the sea, thrown about by blind, deaf, unintelligible natural forces void of purpose, active indeed but ungoverned. Human life to them is a black cloud driven through

immensity by the winds of unintelligent fate and lit by no rainbow. It has no meaning, and its darkness is the deeper because they cannot call a halt and disperse it into nothingness. Like Job's wife they would say 'Curse God and die,' yet they cannot die. But Job, as he sits on the dunghill, looks up at the rainbow and finds a truer philosophy. 'What?' says he, 'shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?'

Under the rainbow's arch there are fruitful fields and beautiful gardens; for where the rainbow hangs in air there is sunshine and there is rain—the parents of fruitfulness. And to whom God gives in equal measure joy and sorrow there is beauty and fruitfulness of heart and life. His promise to 'every living creature' is that He will never send the cloud without the sunshine, and, what is not less gracious, He will never send the sunshine without the cloud. When by day the Israelites tramped the fiery desert He led them by a pillar of cloud, and they marched in its shade; but in the blackness of night He threw in the sky a pillar of sunshine, and they walked through the gloom in its light.

In these terrible days of war, when our hearts begin to fail us and dark doubts cloud the mind, let us look at the covenant God has made with us. He has set it in rainbow colours across the sky, that 'he who runs may read,' and 'the wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err.' God has flung His rainbow over the trench and the grave; over the Garden of Gethsemane; over the Cross on Calvary; and over the tomb in the Arimathean's garden. We are born under the rainbow, live under it, and die under it. At the last we

shall find it over the throne of Judgment. Water and blood flowed from Christ's side ; and life and death, joy and pain, light and darkness, summer and winter, peace and war, come forth from God's heart. Let us take life as it comes, with obedient wills and grateful hearts. The bee finds honey in the thistle as well as in the rose, and ' where the bee sucks, there suck I,' for He who guides the bee guides all. Only in loving obedience to God shall we find true wisdom. It is not what we are given but how we take it that matters. To the humble sorrow may be sweet as honey, and to the proud pleasure may be bitter as gall. Let us leave God to mix the ingredients of our life, assured that ' All things work together for good to them that love God.' It is all in the covenant written by God's fingers in the gorgeous inks of the rainbow, and whenever He brings it from beyond the clouds let us look at it with reverent eyes and ponder its promise. Then shall we be able to say with Wordsworth,

' My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.'

After the sermon we sang, at the request of one of the sergeants,

' The Day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended,
The *darkness* falls at *Thy* behest.'

And beautiful was the singing of it. The Benediction followed, but as I was ending it an impulse came to me and I yielded to its importunity. ' Let us,' I said, ' before we part ; and before we leave Achicourt which has meant so much to us of joy and sorrow ; let us sing a kiddie's hymn. We still shelter in our hearts a little

child. Let us have a hymn for the boy within us who never grows up and never dies.' Then I read out verse by verse, for it was not in their books—

' Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose ;
With Thy tenderest blessing
May their eyelids close.

Grant to little children
Visions bright of Thee ;
Guard the sailors tossing
On the angry sea.

Comfort every sufferer
Watching late in pain ;
Those who plan some evil
From their sin restrain.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise
Pure and fresh, and sinless
In Thy holy eyes.'

I have seen some moving sights in my time and heard deep and thrilling music, but I have never been so deeply moved by anything as I was by the rich deep voices of these gallant men and boys who, after winning the Battle of Arras, had come into this ruined church and were singing as their farewell this beautiful kiddies' hymn. I would that the Colonel could have

heard it, for it is his favourite hymn—and with good reason.

The collection had been so heavy that we carried it to the French lady's house for her. As we entered she said in her simple way, and with eyes that were radiant with gratitude, 'I like the English soldiers.' It was the voice of France. And she was worthy to speak for France. For two and a half years her house had stood within a mile of the German trenches, and but a few hundred yards from our own firing line. Yet she, and her mother, had never left it. She took me in, introduced me to her mother, who had lived in London and spoke English. Then she brought in coffee. I had noticed a most remarkable thing about the house. There was not a piece of glass broken nor a mark of war on the walls. It was the only house that I have seen either in Achicourt or Arras upon which the War has not laid its monstrous and bloody finger. 'How is it,' I asked the mother, 'that your house has not been touched?' Her eyes shone and a sweet smile lit up her features. 'It is the will of God,' she said simply. 'Shells have fallen a little short of us and a little beyond us. They have passed within a yard of the house and we have heard the rushing of the wind as they passed, but they have not touched us. When the village has been bombarded we have gone down into the cellar, as was but discretion and duty, but we had the conviction all along that we should be spared, and we refused to leave the house. We do not know God's purpose, but we believe that it is God's will to spare us. I leave the fact to speak for itself and offer no explanation. Sceptics will say the house was spared

by accident ; but they would not have stayed there two and a half years trusting to such an accident. These two women, without a man in the house, stayed there on the confines of hell, with its hourly suspense and danger, for nearly three years because they believed it was God's will, and that, though they walked through the fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated, He would not allow so much as a hair of their heads to be singed. And not a hair was singed. They were women of common sense in whom faith burned like a bright pillar of fire. One caught its light and felt its heat. I have met patriots and heroes and know their quality when I see them and come near them. These were the real thing. Faith in God and faith in their country were interwoven in their characters like sun and shower in a rainbow. They were of the same breed as the Maid of France, and like her, with their white banner bearing the device of the Cross, they withstood and defied the might and terror of the invader. They believed it was God's will to stay, to ' Be still and know that I am God.' Their experience was expressed by the Psalmist centuries ago : ' God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. . . . Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth ; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder ; he burneth the chariot in the fire. . . . The Lord of

Hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge.' Such was the faith of these two women, and their courage few men have approached. It is a practical matter, and after comparing it with the sceptic's theory of accident and his probable haste in seeking a safer place, I accept the explanation of the women. Their house was spared and not a hair of their heads touched because 'it was God's will.' If this is not the correct theory it ought to be. Otherwise falsehood is more sustaining than truth and inspires nobler conduct.

The day was now over, a new chapter of life written, and in the morning we left behind us this village of rich memories and marched out again into the unknown.

‘ETON BOYS NEVER DUCK’

AN army is more courageous than the individuals who compose it. The coward finds sufficient courage for his job while doing it with his regiment, and the brave is at his bravest. He has a courage which is not his own, but which he puts on with his uniform. He does daring deeds which he could not have done as a civilian. The army has a corporate courage, and each soldier receives a portion of it as he receives a ration of the army's food. It is added to what he has of his own. When a man enters any society he must toe its line or else life becomes an intolerable burden to him. If he joins a gang of thieves he must steal and cut throats with the best, however nauseous the task; and if he joins a society of honest men he must keep his fingers from picking and stealing, even though they are as prone to take others' property as a magnet is to pick up steel shavings. In Rome he must do as the Romans do, and if he does not like their ways he had better keep away. The badge of the army is courage. It is a badge that has been slowly fashioned, and its craftsmen have been Clive, Wolfe, Nicholson, Outram, Havelock, Gordon, Buller, Lord Roberts, the Light Brigade that charged at Balaclava, the soldiers who went down with the *Birkenhead*, and many other famous or forgotten heroes. These have created the moral of the army and fixed its standard

of courage. When a recruit joins the army he knows that he is putting away the civilian standard of courage with his bowler hat, and is putting on the soldier's standard of courage with his uniform. His great fear is that he will not be able to live up to it. He wonders if he is made of the stuff that produces heroes. He is a mystery to himself, and has a haunting fear that there may be a strain of the coward in his make-up. He wishes it were possible to have a rehearsal, for he would rather die than fail on the appointed day. Was it not an English archbishop who put his hand in his study fire to see if his flesh was the flesh of martyrs and could stand the leaping flames at the stake? It was a most human act. He suspected hidden and treacherous weakness, and did not wish to go to war, unless he had more forces on his side than those which were lining up against him. He did not fear death. He feared being unworthy of the martyrs who had gone before him. Bunyan was haunted by the same fear. He was afraid that he might tremble and 'show a white face' when he mounted the scaffold. Not death but fear he feared. The chaplain fears that he will faint and become a hindrance instead of a help when he first sees blood and torn limbs in the dressing-station; and the recruit is afraid of being afraid in the hour of battle and of bringing dishonour and weakness upon his regiment. He will be glad when the trial is over, and he knows the stuff of which nature has made him. A friend of mine told me one day that he was walking over a heavily shelled field with a young aristocrat of a highly-strung temperament. The man was afraid, but would not yield to his fear. His lips

twitched and his face was drawn and white. His movements were jerky, but there was no other sign. He talked about paltry things in which, at the moment, he had not the slightest interest, and passed jocular or sardonic remarks about the things that were happening around them, although he felt in anything but a humorous mood. My friend ducked his head when a shell burst near, as we all have done often enough, but the young aristocrat kept his head as high and stiff as if it were being crowned. He held it up defiantly ; was it not filled with the bluest blood of England ? The shells might blow it off if they liked, that was their concern, not his, but they should never make it bow. His fathers had fought on every English field of battle for centuries and had never bowed their heads to a foe, and he would not break the great tradition. Shells might break his neck, but they should never bend it. He would face the enemy with as stiff an upper lip and as stiff a neck as ever his fathers did. He knew his personal weakness, and reinforced his strength with that of his fathers'. He was not afraid of death. He was afraid of being afraid. My friend was a coachman's son, who by courage and capacity of the highest order had won a commission. He had no traditions either to haunt or help him, and he had often been tried in the fire and knew his strength. He was not afraid of being afraid. It was natural to duck when a shell burst near, and it did him no harm and made no difference to the performance of his duties ; so he ducked as he felt inclined, and then laughed at his nerves for the tricks they were allowing the shells to play on them. But, knowing his companion's more

sensitive nature and temperamental weakness, he was immensely impressed by his stiff neck and proudly erect head. He showed a self-control which only centuries of breeding could give. Here was a hero indeed. The shells he was defying were as nothing to the fears which haunted his imaginative nature and which, with his back to the wall of his family traditions, he was fighting and keeping at bay. My friend could not refrain from complimenting him on resisting the natural tendency to duck the head when a shell screamed above them. ‘Eton boys never duck,’ replied the young aristocrat proudly. He was an Eton boy and would die rather than fall short of the Eton standard and live. In this way hundreds of them have died rather than save themselves by a prudence below the Eton standard. The ranks of our young aristocrats have been terribly thinned in this war, and I have heard their deeds spoken of with a reverence such as is only given to legendary heroes. They have gone sauntering over the crater fields to their deaths with the self-mastery and outward gaiety which the French aristocracy manifested as they placed their heads in the guillotine. To their own personal courage was added the courage of their race and the accumulation of the centuries. We speak of our new armies. There can be no ‘new’ armies of Britons. The tradition of our newest army goes back to Boadicea. Its forerunners, without shields or armour, and almost without weapons, dared the Romans—the proud conquerors of the world—to battle; and gave them the longest odds warriors ever gave. They knew they could not win, but they knew they could die.

Dead warriors they might become but never living slaves. They ran up Boadicea's proud banner because they knew that while the Romans might soak it in British blood no power on earth could drag it through the mire.

Our fathers crossed swords with Cæsar and the Romans ; with Napoleon and the French, and maintained their freedom and independence ; and our newest army goes into battle with the prestige born of two thousand years of war. They have a moral that belongs to the race in addition to the moral they possess as individuals. It is said that ' the English do not know when they are beaten.' How should they know ? They have had no teachers. All they know is that if they have not gained the victory the battle is not ended and must go on until they pitch their tents on the undisputed field. Napoleon tried at Waterloo to batter out of our soldiers' heads the tradition of victory, but before the sunset he gave up the attempt in despair. Now, his imitator, the German Emperor, assays the task. He spreads out his ' War Map,' but it is as undecipherable as the mountains in the moon to our soldiers. Tyrants have never found them apt scholars at geography. They prefer to make their own maps, even though they have no paint to colour them with except the red blood in their veins. The Kaiser may roll up his War Map of Europe ; our soldiers have no use for it ; they do not like it, and will not commit to memory its new boundaries. They feel in their souls the capacity to make a new one more in line with their ideas of fair play. English boys never duck to foreign schoolmasters. If the

muscles of their necks show a tendency to relax they call to mind the figures their fathers have cut in history, and their necks become stiff and taut once more, ready to break rather than bend. Wellington said that Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, and it is still true that ‘ Eton boys never duck ’ to the foe ; nor do the soldiers they lead.

THE TERROR BY NIGHT

JUNE was a flaming month on the high ground which we had captured beyond Arras. The Quartermaster and Transport officer with whom I was messing were both 'on leave,' so, as I was the only officer left in the camp, a Baptist Padre, whose regiment was near, came to live with me. I had a little brown tent, five feet wide and six feet long, which a rifleman had lent to me because the bell-tent which I was expecting had not arrived. The rifleman did not need his tent, for he and his chums had built themselves a little dug-out. Next day the bell-tent arrived, and the other Padre took possession of it, while I held on to the little brown shelter. Next to me was the kitchen where the servants slept and cooked. It was a truly wonderful contrivance of wood, corrugated iron and ground-sheets. The Baptist chaplain's tent was round, my shelter oblong, but what shape the kitchen was would pass the wit of man to say. It was a shape never seen on earth before. It had no ancestor, and it could have no descendant. Such a design could not occur twice. Beyond the kitchen were the horse-lines of the regiment, and close by them the Regimental Stores. It was so hot that we all wore our lightest clothing; and when the servants got lemons from Arras the lemonade only lasted about five minutes, for what was left by us was quickly drunk up by the servants

with the assistance of those who like to frequent such happy places as mess kitchens. All our meals were served out of doors under the blue sky. We had guests most days, for officers coming out from England generally stayed with us for a little while before going up with the rations at night to the regiment in the trench. Other officers came down to stay with us on their way to a course at some military school ; and one came to wait for the day on which he was to take his ' leave.' We were therefore a merry party. It was almost like camping on the Yorkshire moors, for we had an uninterrupted view for many miles. To those who love vast stretches of wild, barren country, as I do, the scene under the flaming June sun was exceedingly impressive. There were no houses, streams, hedges, or trees, but the whole area was scored with trenches cut into the white chalk and showing clearly at great distances. The ground, with but short spaces between, was covered with encampments. These consisted of the stores and horse-lines of the regiments and batteries in the line. The circle of the horizon was bounded by the charred ruins of French villages—Beaurains, Neuville Vitasse, Wancourt, Monchy and Tilloy. At meal-times we sat watching the flashing of our guns and the black bursts of shells from the enemy. All day the sky was thick with aeroplanes, and many were too high to be seen except through strong field-glasses. One day we saw behind us a German aeroplane circling over Arras and directing the fire of the long guns. Soon the streets were strewn with dead and wounded, for the town was full of troops. It only lasted a few minutes, however. One of our aeroplanes quickly challenged the enemy

to single combat; and we soon saw the German machine falling from an immense height wing over wing and head over tail, utterly out of control. Dinner, in the cool of the evening, was a most pleasant meal. As we drank our coffee we watched the aeroplanes returning from the line like birds to their nests. Sometimes we counted as many as twenty all heading for home at the same time. The sun set in red and golden splendour, and we wondered what the night would bring. On the night before our arrival the regiment which made way for us had one of its storemen killed by a shell; and on most nights a few shells fell in some part or other of the vast camp. One evening shells fell a little beyond us and the transport sergeant moved his horse-lines. After that he moved the lines every evening at dark, so that the ground where the enemy had observed the horses in the daytime was left vacant when he opened fire at night. It was a game of chess, with horses and men for pawns, and life and death for the stakes. On the evening before our guest (a young lieutenant) was to go on leave he got very uneasy. As gulls scent the approach of stormy weather and come inland, or blackbirds and larks feel the approach of winter and migrate to the south, so men can sometimes scent danger and coming death. He had with him a bottle of whisky, and he kept it on the table outside my tent—a safe place for it. ‘I don’t mind telling you, Padre,’ he said as he poured out a glass, ‘I’ve got the wind up badly to-night. I don’t like the feel of things. I would rather be in the trenches than here, because I know what is likely to happen there, but here in the open I feel strange and unprotected. I shall be glad

when it is morning.' His feeling was quite natural. We always feel another man's dangers more than our own, because they are new to us and we don't know what to expect or how to meet them. A man will choose a big danger that he is used to sooner than a lesser danger that is new to him. Besides, he had his 'leave warrant' in his breast pocket and that will sap any man's courage. He has a feeling that the shells are after his 'leave warrant' and that the gunners know all about him. He suspects that fate is malignant and takes a special delight in killing a man when he is on his way to 'Blighty.' Many a man has been killed with a 'leave warrant' in his pocket or with 'commission papers' in it which were taking him home. Our doctor told me how one night he and the chaplain who preceded me were riding on the front of an ambulance car when a shell burst and with a fragment killed the chaplain. In the Padre's pocket was his warrant, and he was taking his last ride before going home; but instead of going to England he went to his long home, and the warrant lies in the grave with him. A man feels particularly vulnerable when the long-looked-for 'leave warrant' is in his pocket. He may not fear death after 'leave,' but he does on the eve of 'leave.' He wants one more look at his home and loved ones before going on the long and lone journey which, despite all the comfort which the Christian religion gives, still retains much of its terror to the human spirit. There have been few better Christians than Doctor Johnson and John Bunyan, but neither of them could without misgivings contemplate fording the river of death. When they came to it they found it much less formidable than they

had expected. Had they been at the Front with a 'leave warrant' in their pockets to 'Fleet Street, London,' or 'Elstow, Bedford,' I fancy neither of them would have taken undue risks. I could sympathize with the young lieutenant, for, a few months before, a 'leave warrant' had made a bit of a coward of me. I was in two minds whether or not to go up to the firing line to see the men again before shipping for England. The 'leave warrant' was in my pocket, and I was to go next morning; but the doctor's story of my predecessor came to mind. I saw the faces of my wife and mother and friends. I saw the faithful pleading eyes of my beautiful dog. The old home and the green fields of England stretched themselves out before me; and I decided to see them first and the 'boys' after. I had just been with my men, but it was a long time since I had been with those at home. It was their turn. If there *was* a shell with my name and address on it, I thought I would make the Hun postman wait till I had been home before I let him deliver it into my hands. I think a 'leave warrant' would make a coward of any man. At any rate, the feeling is quite understood and recognised by every one at the Front; and this young officer had been sent down from the trenches to us, three days before his train was due to start, so that he might have a better chance of using his 'warrant,' and, at the same time, feel more at ease in mind.

I undressed and got into bed, and was reading by the light of a candle when the lieutenant came to the tent door again. 'It's no use, Padre,' he said, 'I can't go to bed yet. I feel too uneasy. I wish I was on the train.' He went back to the bell-tent which he was

sharing with the other chaplain and I put out my light. There was the silence of a summer evening, broken only by the distant bursting of shells. Then, suddenly, there was a crash at about seventy yards from our tents, and two more near the horse-lines. 'To run or not to run?' that was the question; and my answer was in the negative. If I ran it was just as likely that I should run into a shell as out of the way of one. On Easter Sunday I had seen three of our non-commissioned officers killed in that way. Besides, I like my bed, once I have taken the trouble to get into it. I therefore put on my steel helmet, which I had placed by the bedside, and waited to see what would happen. (A steel helmet is a wonderful comfort to a man under fire.) We may not have much in our heads, but we feel very anxious about them during a bombardment. The helmets are heavy and uncomfortable and we don't like wearing them, but; nevertheless, may blessings ever rest on the head of the man who invented them. I have seen scores of lives saved by them, and they have given infinite comfort and assurance in trying moments. A long silence followed, then the lieutenant appeared at the door of the tent again. 'You haven't been here all the time, have you?' he asked. 'We went down to the old trenches at the bottom of the camp; but it is rather cold and wearisome there, and I think the worst is over now. I'm just going to take another sip of the "Scotch wine" and then turn in for the night; but I'm not going to undress.' Ten minutes had not elapsed when there was a tremendous crash, as if a star had fallen on top of us. There was a blinding flash of light, a strong smell of powder, and a spluttering of bullets

on the ground. That was enough to get the laziest man out of bed, and to answer the question, 'to run or not to run?' in the affirmative. I slipped on my boots without fastening the laces, put on my trench coat and bade my little tent a fond farewell. There were some old German gun-pits close by, and I sought refuge there. 'Come in here, sir,' cried a voice, and I found myself by the side of a sergeant. Then the cook ran in barefoot and laughing. No one seemed to have been hit, and all had now sought shelter. We waited for some time and nothing happened. The night was cold and I was beginning to shiver in my pyjamas, so I looked about for a place to sleep in; for a feeling of estrangement had grown up between me and the little brown tent. There was a path across a shallow bit of trench, and underneath it I found the barber lying comfortably on his bed. He invited me in, and said that I could have the bed and he would sleep at the side of it on his ground-sheet. He could, he said, sleep as soundly on the ground as on the bed of stretched sacking. I therefore returned to the tent to get blankets. The time fuse of a shell had gone through the kitchen and rebounded from a beam on to my servant, but without doing any serious injury, and he proposed sleeping there for the night. He only agreed to move to some safer place when I ordered him to do so. There was no one in the bell-tent, so I knew the occupants were quite safe somewhere. On striking a light to get my blankets, etc., I noticed three small holes in the top of the tent, and knew that shrapnel bullets had missed me only by inches. It had been a close shave; and it was not inappropriate that I was

going to be the guest of a barber. The psychological effect was not one that I should have expected. The incident caused no shell shock and but little immediate excitement; and I was soon asleep. All the others were in a like case. The excitement came with the morning when we examined the tents and the ground. In the bell-tent there were ten shrapnel bullet holes. One had gone through the piece of wood on which the officers' clothing had been hung, and must have passed immediately over the body of the Baptist chaplain as he lay in bed. Others must have passed equally near the lieutenant, who was not in bed but standing up at the time fully dressed. In my own little tent we found eleven holes, and they were in all parts of the canvas. Some of the bullets must have gone in at one side and out at the other, for we only found five embedded in the hard chalky ground within the tent. A sixth had passed through the box at the bed head and entered deeply into a book which I had been reading. Outside the kitchen the servants picked up a lump of shell a foot long and three or four inches wide. Well for them it was that the fragment fell outside the kitchen and not in. The ground around the tents was sprinkled with shrapnel bullets and bits of shell. The shells which fell near the horses had burst on touching the ground and not, like ours, in the air. They had dug deep holes in the earth, and as the horses were within a few yards of them it seemed miraculous that none was hurt. The transport had just returned from taking up the rations, and, as one of the drivers leapt off his horse, a bullet hit the saddle where his leg had been a second before. Not a man or horse had received a

scratch, although the shells had made a direct hit on our camp. On other occasions one shell has laid out scores of men and horses. They say that sailors don't like Padres on board, for they think they bring them bad luck. And most people are a little afraid of the figure thirteen, but though it was the thirteenth of June and there were two Padres in the tents, we had the best of what is called 'luck.' So I think we may say it was 'one up' for the Padres. After breakfast we gathered together some of the fragments lying around the tents and found the nose-cap of the shell which had burst seventy yards away. With these, and the time-fuse which hit my servant, the other chaplain and I went to a battery and asked the officers to tell us something about the gun. We took our fragments just as one would take a bone of some extinct creature to a scientist and ask him to draw a picture of the whole animal. They told us that the gun was a long-range, high-velocity, naval gun, with a possible range of fifteen miles. They knew where it was but could not hit it. The shot was a large high-explosive shrapnel shell, and the time-fuse indicated that it had come to us from about eleven miles away. On our return we built ourselves dug-outs for the nights and only lived in the tents by day. Sometimes we were shelled in the day, but by taking cover took no hurt, though a lad in the Q.V.R. transport next to us was seriously wounded. When they were shelling us by day we could distinctly hear the report of the gun; then a second or two later see the shell burst in the air; and a second later still we could hear it. The burst was seen before it was heard.

I have given this personal incident, not, I hope, out

of any impulse of egotism, but because it will give those who have not been at the Front an idea of the terror which assails our men by night both in the trenches and in the 'back areas.' There can be few who have been long at the Front who have not had similar experiences and equally narrow escapes. They are so common that men get used to them and do not take nearly enough care to protect themselves. Loss by such stray shells is expected, and the soldiers regard it much as a tradesman regards the deterioration of his stock. One gets used to the frequent occurrence of death as of anything else. In England there are thousands of preventable deaths occurring through street accidents, diseases and underfeeding. The number could be enormously reduced if the nation would rouse itself. And human nature is much the same at the Front. Men prefer ease and comfort to safety. Also men grow fatalistic. They have seen men sought out by shells after they had taken every precaution to escape them; and they have seen others go untouched when they seemed to be inviting shells to destroy them. Men are conscious of a power that is not themselves directing their lives. They feel that in life which the Greek tragedians called Fate. They do not know quite what to call it. Most of them would call it Providence if they spoke frankly and gave it a name at all. One of the finest Christian officers I know told me, as we walked through a shell-swept village, that he believed that God's fingers had already written what his fate should be. If he had to die nothing could save him, and if he had to live nothing could kill him. All that concerned him was to do his duty and take

whatever God sent to him. This, he said, was the only suitable working philosophy for a man at the Front.

It is a different thing from Omar Khayyám's

' The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,
 Moves on : nor all thy Piety nor Wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
 Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.'

It is rather the teaching of Christ, ' Take no thought for your life . . . for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness. Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' There is a widespread fatalism at the Front, but it is the fatalism of Christ rather than of Omar Khayyám. And it works. It enables men to ' put a cheerful courage on ' and do their duty. There is none of the paralysis of will and cessation of effort which follows the fatalistic philosophy of the East. All that Omar Khayyám's fatalism leaves a man to strive after is ' Wine, Wine, Wine, Red Wine,' and in it he drowns memory, honour and reputation. When he has passed from among his peers there is nothing left to remember him by but a ' turned down empty glass.' The Christian fatalism at the Front destroys no man's initiative, but keeps him ' merry and bright,' and helps him to ' do his bit.' When he shall pass from the banqueting house of Life into Death's dark street, to go to his long home, he will leave as his memorial, not a turned down glass, but a society redeemed from tyranny and wrong.

SONS OF THE MOTHERLAND

IT is said that the eel is born in the deepest part of the ocean, thousands of miles from any country, and that, urged by an overpowering instinct it begins almost at once to rise towards the light and to head for the land. After slowly swimming thousands of miles it reaches our rivers, pushes its way up to their sources, and even crawls through the grass out of one stream into another. Here, if uncaught by man, it lives for years gorging an appetite which only developed on reaching the fresh water. Then, the overmastering instinct that brought it out takes it back. It returns through the illimitable waters until it finds the place where it was born. There the female lays her eggs, and there male and female die. The eggs hatch, and the young do as their parents did before them. I do not think I could kill or eat an eel. I have too much reverence for it now that I have learned its story. When I see an eel struggling to get out of a coster's barrow in the East End I feel that I want to take it and drop it into the sea, that it may go to its long home, 'far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife.' How passionate and wild must be its desire to get back to its own ocean depths, where it may perpetuate its kind and die in peace! Its appetite is voracious, but then, what but the mightiest and most elemental instincts and appetites could carry it through

achievements so sublime and tragic. Think of the lone journey—

‘When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.’

It puts out to sea, urged on by it knows not what ! Scientists say that man has evolved from a tiny form of life that passed through the fish stage. If so, it explains a lot, and I, for one, shall not be ashamed to acknowledge relationship to a fish with a life-story as sublime as that of the eel. I know that Genesis speaks truly when it says that God made us out of the dust of the earth and breathed into our souls the breath of His own being, thus animating dust with divinity. And if from the other inspired book, the book of Nature, scientists can teach how God mixed the clay when He fashioned man I will accept the teaching with gratitude, for it will help me to understand things that are dark in me and in my fellows. It will throw light on the wild longings, and instincts immature, that baffle the mind and come into the clear shallow streams of life, like eels out of the dark unfathomable depths of the ocean. Since I came to France I have been amazed at this homing instinct, as revealed in the coming together of the sons of our Motherland. People at home do not quite realize what has happened. Our sons have come back to us as silently as eels to their birth-place ; and like them they have come back to die—if needs be—that their race may be saved and perpetuated. The British are a roving race. A large number of them feel an overpowering desire to go out into the world. The South Pole and the North Pole have

heard the tread of the Englishman. His ship has anchored in every creek of every sea. There is no town or country, however remote, where his voice has not been heard. Even Mecca could not keep him out. He must look upon its 'Black Stone.' All lands call him to come, and see, and conquer. He colonizes and absorbs, but cannot be absorbed. He is an Englishman still. A friend of mine told me that when visiting Australia strangers who had never seen England, except in and through their fathers, would come to him in railway carriage or 'bus, and ask, 'How is everything at *Home*?' And Dr. Fitchett, Australia's splendid author, confesses that when he first saw England he knelt down and kissed its shore. Loving England with a passion stronger than death we leave it, for we hear the call of the world; the winds and waves bear the call from afar and we cannot refuse it. It is to us what the call of the land is to the eel. In foreign lands we live and labour. We roam in their fields and swim in their streams, but always with an ear listening for the voice of the Motherland; for we are hers, and at her service if she calls. The Declaration of War on August 4, 1914, was the Mother's call to her children. Swifter than lightning it passed through the waves and on the wings of the wind. The settler left his lonely cabin, the gold digger his shovel, the prospector his measuring instruments, the rancher his herds, the missionary his church, the teacher his school, the clerk his office; and all made for the nearest port. Within a month there was not a ship on the wide seas but was bearing back Britons to their Motherland's defence. I have met in France British soldiers from

every country under heaven. I bent over a dying soldier in the battle of Arras who was a clerk in Riga, Russia, when the call came. And one night on the Somme a fair, taking youth entered our tent about 9.30, from Africa, and slept by my side. He was one of the most charming and handsome men I have met, and had come from Durban. He had fought with Botha in South-West Africa, and then shipped for England. Next day I took him to Delville Wood, for he wanted to see the place where his brother had died. I found that he was a Methodist, and we talked about some of my College friends who had gone to Natal; then I tore out of our Church Minutes the list of South African ministers, and he placed it carefully in his breast pocket. Two days later he died of wounds in a dressing-station, and was buried with the names of our South African ministers in the pocket over his heart. Most of the transport officers in our Division have come home from abroad, and have been given their posts because they are accustomed to horses. One was prospecting in Nigeria, another salmon-canning in Siberia, and a third was on a plantation in South America.

In addition to the Canadians, South Africans, Australians, and New Zealanders who have come by the hundred thousand at the call of the Motherland, there are hundreds of thousands who have come singly, or in small parties, from remote corners of the earth and from countries such as the United States. For five weeks I was a patient in a Canadian Hospital in France. The entire staff was Canadian. Some were Canadian born; others had gone out to that country

years ago. All were of our blood. The colonel was a magnificent specimen of manhood from London in Canada, where he had been born. He would sit on the bed and tell us tales of the great snow-land. Sometimes he would scold us for being so blind to the greatness of England and tell us of Canada's admiration for her. An orderly who sometimes brought the coffee, told me he had emigrated from Kent. He was making good money on his farm in Canada, and if he had gone sooner he would now have been rich. Our methods of farming are antiquated, he said, and our land laws ruin the tenants. In Canada each owns his own farm, and the government of the country is democratic, and not a pretence at democracy as in England. Every man is equal, and no man calls another 'sir.' If he were to sit down by the Governor of Canada, Duke though he were, he would talk to him as an equal and without calling him 'sir.' He was very scornful of our slow English ways, and despised our snobbishness. The red wine of liberty had made him reckless and loosened his tongue. I listened with amusement, approval and doubt mixed in about equal parts. But I was immensely impressed by the fact of the man being there. He had a farm in Canada and was making good money, which he needed for the old age that was quickly overtaking him. He spoke with a touch of scorn about England; and yet he was there in France, in a khaki uniform, to defend England. And, incidentally, I noticed that ever after that night he called me 'sir.' Was it for listening humbly to his tirade against England, and then telling him at the finish that with all her faults England was the biggest little country

in the world? Would he have been there if he had not agreed with me? Another of the night orderlies would, on occasion, recite to us some poem such as 'Jim Bludso,' before the lights went out, then he would come to my locker and take Palgrave's *Treasury of Songs and Lyrics* to regale his soul with during the long watches of the night. He was the full height of men and straight as a pine. He had gone out from Ireland while a boy and settled on a cattle ranch in the United States. One day there was trouble, and one of the other cowboys sent a bullet clean through his chest. The moment England declared war he left his roving herds of cattle, crossed the frontier into Canada and travelled hundreds of miles to Winnipeg to enlist. The doctor looked at him, 'What is this scar on your chest?' he asked. 'Oh,' replied the cowboy, 'I fell off a wagon and knocked the skin off.' The doctor turned him round and put his finger in the scar on his back where the bullet had passed out. 'And what is this scar on the back? Did you fall off another wagon?' And the two men understood one another and laughed. The doctor could not find it in his heart to send him back to his ranch, so the cowboy was passed into the Canadian A.M.C. One of the nurses we called 'the Little Mother.' She had gone to Canada five years before the war, but it had brought her back, and well it was for us. Among the patients was a doctor of the American A.M.C. His ancestors had left England many generations ago and settled in New England, but he had come back at the call of war—a grandson of the Motherland. Then there was an English lieutenant who had been born and brought up at Antwerp.

As the German guns were destroying his native city he took ship to enlist in the English army. 'Anzac' was, as his nickname denotes, an Australian. He was in the flying corps. He had heard the call at school and had come 'home' to the land of his fathers.

In one regiment I found a bunch of English youths who had been born in China, but, out there in Hong Kong, they heard the call of a Motherland they had never seen, and came post-haste to her help. An officer, near me as I write, came back from the Argentine, and already on his arm is a gold wound-stripe. Another in the mess was pearl-fishing in Australia, and stored his boats to come and fight. Another at our table was born in Australia. He was with Scott on his last expedition, and saw him go out to the South Pole and death. He has already been wounded. When the war broke out its tumult seemed to wake our fathers, and we felt them stir in our blood; for ancestors are not put into graves but are buried alive in their sons. We felt the call to defend our race as our fathers did in their day. It was a master instinct, and the millions of men who voluntarily left home and business to fight for the flag show how deeply nationality is rooted in our nature. Like eels returning from a far land to their ocean home, to die—if needs be—that their kind may live; the scattered sons of our Motherland have come by all the seas to defend her in her hour of need. They have

'Come as the winds come
When forests are rended;
Come as the waves come
When navies are stranded.'

A WHITE HANDKERCHIEF

I N his history of the Somme campaign, Mr. John Buchan quotes, from an official report, an incident which, though I have tried, I cannot get my imagination to believe. Probably the incident is a true one, but, unfortunately for me, my mind will not let it in. I cannot visualize it, and the report is turned from the door as an impostor. The report states that in a certain attack our aeroplanes fired on the Germans in their trenches and that the enemy waved white handkerchiefs in token of surrender. I can imagine without the slightest difficulty all except the white handkerchiefs. Where did they get them to wave? Men in the firing trenches don't carry anything so conspicuous as a white handkerchief. To draw it out in a thoughtless moment might bring a sniper's bullet, and there are risks enough without inviting more. I doubt if in any English regiment two white handkerchiefs can be found; and I have little expectation that more could be found among the enemy. Further, it is questionable, at this stage of the war, if a white handkerchief would be regarded as a sign of surrender. It might be taken as a taunt.

There is nothing more remarkable in the war than the psychological change that has overtaken white. A white feather used to be the badge of cowardice and a white flag the token of surrender. It is not so now.

White has taken on a peculiar sacredness: If a new medal were to be struck of the same high value as the Victoria Cross it would probably be given a white ribbon. This change in the moral significance of white was brought home to me by an incident in a billet. I had gone to a barn to give the men some shirts and socks that had been sent to me. I stood on the steps, like an auctioneer, and offered my goods for acceptance. 'Who wants a shirt? Who a scarf? Who wants this pair of mittens? Who a pair of socks?' Hands shot up at each question, and the fun grew fast and furious. Then I drew out and held up a white handkerchief. 'A—ah! A—ah!' they cried wistfully in chorus. For a moment they stood gazing at it and forgot to raise their hands towards it; then, with a single movement, every hand shot up. Unwittingly I had stirred them to the depths; and I felt sorry for them. The Magic Carpet of Baghdad is not a fiction after all. In the twinkling of an eye my white handkerchief had carried every boy and man to his home, and placed him by the fireside. I saw it in their eyes and heard it in the sadness and wistfulness of their voices as they burst into the ejaculation 'A—ah!' They had not seen a white handkerchief for months. The last they saw was at home. A vision of home flashed before their minds, and they were back in the dear old days of peace, when they used white handkerchiefs and khaki ones were unknown to them. If in battle they were to see Germans waving white handkerchiefs, I think it would make them savage and unwilling to give quarter. They would think the enemy was taunting them with all they had lost. And they would be maddened by

the thought that here were the very men who, by their war-lust, had caused them to lose it. For a German to wave a white handkerchief before a British soldier would be as dangerous as flaunting a red rag before a bull. It would bring death rather than pity. Anything of pure white is rare at the Front, and it has gradually taken on a meaning it never held before. About the only white thing we have is the paper we write home on, and that use of the colour helps to sanctify it in the thoughts of the heart. Also, when a soldier makes the supreme sacrifice it is a white cross that we place above his grave. The Germans often use black crosses. We never do.

In the army it is a term of supreme praise to call a man *white*. When you say a comrade is a '*white man*' there is no more to be said. It is worth more than the Victoria Cross with its red ribbon, for it includes gallantry, and adds to it goodness. A man must be brave to be called white, and he must be generous, noble and good. To reach whiteness is a great achievement. To be called white is, in the army, like being dubbed knight at King Arthur's Court, or canonized saint in the Church. He stands out among his comrades distinct as a white handkerchief among khaki ones. I don't know where the term came from, but, wherever it may have called on the way, I think its footprints could be traced back to St. John's Book of the Revelation for its starting-place. In the first chapter we have a picture of Christ as the first 'White Man' — 'His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.' In the second chapter His faithful followers are given 'a white stone, and in the stone a new name written.'

Is not the new name 'White man'? In the third chapter we have 'a few names even in Sardis which have *not defiled their garments*; and they shall *walk with me in white*; for they are worthy.' There, too, the Laodiceans are counselled to buy 'white raiment.' In the fourth chapter we see the four and twenty elders, sitting around the throne under the rainbow arch, 'clothed in white raiment.' In the sixth chapter we have the crowned King going 'forth conquering, and to conquer,' and he is sitting on a 'white horse,' that is, he uses 'white' instruments to carry out his conquests. Death, in the same chapter, rides on a 'pale' horse but not a 'white' one. Under the altar were the souls of the martyrs, 'and white robes were given unto every one of them.' And surely the climax is reached when we read in the seventh chapter that 'a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes.' So striking was the scene that one of the elders asked, 'What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?' And the answer is given, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God.' In the army white has come back to its ancient significance. The brave and noble martyrs of the early church were given 'white robes,' and in the army to-day the brave and pure wear 'white robes' in the eyes of their comrades. When the Rev. Clifford Reed, M.C., was killed by a shell at his regimental aid post the colonel wrote of him that he was the

' whitest man ' he had ever known. He had done more than wear ' the white flower of a *blameless* life.' His virtues were positive, not merely negative—white, not pale. He wore a ' white *robe* ' ; not a mere speck of white such as a white flower in a buttonhole would appear. White is a positive colour, not a negative. Reed was more than ' blameless,' he was ' white.' To our soldiers a white handkerchief speaks of home, and a ' white man ' speaks of honour and heroism and heaven.

‘MISSING’

THE word ‘Missing’ has now a more terrible power over the human heart than the word ‘Death.’

The word ‘Death’ kills the heart’s joy and hope with a sharp clean cut, but ‘Missing’ is a clumsy stroke from the executioner’s axe. In a few cases the wounded victim is spared and allowed to recover, but in the majority of cases there is no reprieve, and a second blow is struck after a period of suspense and suffering. A chaplain dreads the word. As he opens his correspondence after a battle it fixes on him as the glittering eye of the Ancient Mariner fastened itself on the wedding guest. It leaps from the page at him with the malignant suddenness of a serpent. Wounds and death he can explain to relatives, but ‘Missing’ is beyond explanation. No one who has not been to the Front can conceive how a lad can disappear and no one see what becomes of him. A man may read graphic accounts of the conditions of life in the battle-line, but it is beyond his imagination to visualize them with any real approach to truth.

After the first day of the Somme campaign we had hundreds of casualties, and most of them were classed as ‘Missing.’ The soldiers went ‘over the top’ and did not return, and no one knew why. They were simply ‘Missing.’ Why did no one know their fate? It came about in this way. The regiment scrambled

over the parapet and, forming in line, charged across 'No Man's Land' in extended order. Some fell immediately. The wounded among them got back to the dressing-station. And the bodies of the dead were found within a few days, at least. So far, there are no 'Missing.' The rest of the men press on, some falling at every step; the line thins, and the men get separated. When a man falls, his neighbour cannot stay with him. He must press on to the objective; otherwise, if the unwounded stayed to succour the wounded, there would be none to continue the attack; and under the hail of shells and bullets sweeping the open ground every one would perish. The only way to succour the wounded is to press on, capture the enemy trench, and stop the rifle and machine gun fire. Consequently, the man who presses on does not know whether his comrade fell dead, was wounded, or merely took cover in a shell hole. Also, he may be killed himself later, and his knowledge dies with him.

If the attack succeeds, and the German trench is held by us, 'No Man's Land' can be searched. The wounded and dead are found and but few are reported 'Missing.' But if the attack fails, and the regiment has to retire to its own line, it becomes impossible for us to search that part of 'No Man's Land' adjoining the German trench (for there is rarely any truce after a battle in this war), and so it is impossible to find out whether those who have failed to return were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. The comrades who saw them fall are probably killed, for the return is as fatal as the attack. If they come back wounded, they are taken straight to the hospitals and so have no chance

of reporting to their officers the fate of those whom they saw fall. Only the unwounded return to the regiment, and, in a lost battle, these are few and know but little of what happened to those around them. They were excited and were fighting for their lives. They had no leisure to observe the fate of others. On the 1st of July 1916 our regiment took the German trenches and held them for some hours by desperate fighting, but before dusk it had to retire. Many were left dead or wounded in the captured trenches and many fell on the way back. The few who got back to us unwounded could give very little information about individuals who were missing. They had been separated one from another, and fighting hour after hour with desperation. All therefore who did not return to the regiment or dressing-station, and whose bodies were not recovered, were reported as 'Missing,' unless declared dead by reliable eye-witnesses. The evidence of eye-witnesses must be carefully examined before a regiment dare report a soldier dead on the strength of it. During an attack a man is in an abnormal state of excitement, and the observations of his senses are not entirely reliable. Men imagine they see things, and frequently make mistakes in identity. I have known many cases in which a man has sworn that he saw another being carried to the dressing-station, and afterwards the missing man's body has been found near the German lines. The eye-witness simply mistook one man for another. No end of pain has been caused by these mistakes, and a regiment rightly declines on such evidence to report a soldier as killed.

Some weeks after the battle of July 1, we got

letters from officers and men who had been taken prisoners; or information about them came through the Geneva Red Cross Society. Those of whom we heard nothing for six months we knew to be, in all probability, dead. Nine months later, the Germans retired from the position, and many of our dead were found still lying out in 'No Man's Land.' Some were identified. Others were not. Their discs had perished through the long exposure. Many of the dead had been left in the German trenches. These had been buried by the enemy, and he had left no crosses to mark the graves. After more than a year there is no direct evidence of the death of many who fought on that day. They are 'Missing,' and we can only conclude that they were killed.

In other cases men are reported missing for several weeks, and then reported dead. I will give a case to show how it comes about. We attacked one morning at dawn. The enemy were on the run and in a state of exhaustion. An immediate attack would, it was believed, carry the position without much loss of life, even though our big guns had not had time to come up in support. Unfortunately the Germans were, unknown to us, reinforced during the night. Their new troops met our men with a hail of rifle and machine-gun fire, and the regiment was ordered to retire. Several failed to return. We knew that some had been forced to surrender, especially among the wounded. Others had been killed. Those who returned unwounded were not able, however, to give us the names of those who had been killed or of those who had been taken prisoners. The attack had been made in the half-light

of dawn so that our men could not be seen distinctly. They had also advanced in extended order so as to avoid making themselves an easy target. The half-light and the distance of one man from another made it difficult, therefore, for any one to see either who fell or why they fell. Most of those who were killed or taken prisoners were therefore reported as 'Missing.' A few days later the whole Division was moved to another part of the Front. A fresh regiment took our place, and, a few weeks later, with adequate artillery support, carried the German trenches. After the battle the regiment sent out burial parties to bury both its own dead and ours who had been left in the German half of 'No Man's Land.' Each soldier has two identification discs, one on his wrist and another round his neck. The burial party removes one, and buries the other with the body. Each grave was marked with the soldier's name, and his disc and pay book were sent to our regiment as proof of his death. The War Office was then informed that 'Rfn. —, previously reported missing, is now reported killed.'

There are, however, cases of missing men which cannot be explained. The facts never come to light, and we can only guess what happened. They may have been buried by the enemy, or they may have been buried in the dark by some regimental burial party which could not find their discs. They may even have been buried by a shell or blown to fragments by a direct hit. We have no evidence.

After the attack on Gommécourt a youth I knew had his wound dressed at the regimental aid post and was seen, by more than one of his chums, passing down

the communication trench to the advanced dressing-station where I happened to be. Yet he never arrived, slight though his wound was. It was impossible for him to have become lost. His brother and I made every possible inquiry about him, but nothing ever came to light, and we both came to the conclusion that on his way down the trench he had been buried by a shell. In another case an officer was wounded, and four stretcher-bearers went out to bring him in. None was ever seen again, and later, when we came into possession of the ground, the body of none of them was found. It was scarcely possible for them to have been taken prisoners, and they were never reported as having been captured. We concluded, therefore, that a shell had both killed and buried them.

One day a rifleman reported sick to the doctor and was sent down the line to the dressing-station, whence he would be sent on to a rest camp. He was not seriously ill and needed no escort. It was impossible for him to have wandered into the German lines, and yet he never reported at the dressing-station or anywhere else. Loss of memory is very rare, but even if that had happened to him he could not have wandered about behind our lines without being found and arrested. No report of his burial ever reached us, and we were led to the conclusion that he had been killed by a shell on the way down, and in such a way that the means of identification were lost. In another case, a private, wounded in the arm, was sent down the line in company with a party of stretcher-bearers who were carrying a 'lying case.' Evidently he became separated from them in the dark, and was hit by a shell, for he

never reached any dressing-station, and his fate was never known.

Conditions at the Front are such that these mysterious disappearances must inevitably occur. Every possible arrangement, which circumstances will allow, is made to prevent them ; but they cannot be altogether eliminated. People at home may sometimes think that more might have been done, but that is because they have no conception of the amazing conditions in which the war is carried on. Every officer and private knows that he may disappear without leaving a trace. That being so, they, if only from common prudence and the instinct of self-preservation, combine to reduce the danger to its lowest limits ; but, when all has been done, war is war ; and nothing can rob it of its terrors. Every day officers and men die in trying to save their comrades, and nothing could be more unjust than to blame those who survive for not having done more to prevent others from being lost ; for those who are surviving to-day may become missing to-morrow, and leave no trace behind. Officers have sometimes shown me letters from poor distracted relatives which could never have been written if they could have imagined the deadly peril in which the officers stood, and the manifold distractions that wore them down. Sometimes an officer's letter is short and business-like in reply to an inquiry, but it must be remembered that his first duty is to the living. He must hold the line and save his men ; and he has, despite the tragedy of his position, to answer not one inquiry but scores. And before he has finished answering all the inquiries perhaps his parents will be making inquiries about his

own fate. Our officers are the bravest and kindest-hearted men that ever had the lives of others in their keeping ; and when the chaplain asks them for details about any missing or slain soldier they will go to endless trouble for him. They know what their own death will mean to their parents ; and the knowledge makes their hearts go out in sympathy to the parents of ' their men,' and it makes them do all that is possible to prevent lives being lost.

When Moses died no man knew the place of his burial. It has not been found to this day. We know nothing of his last thoughts, or of the manner of his death. His end is a perfect mystery. But we know that he died in the presence of God ; that God strengthened him in the dread hour ; and that with His own fingers He closed the lids over the prophet's brave, tender eyes. God buried Moses in a grave dug by His own hands, and when He revisits the sacred mounts where, within the curtaining clouds, great souls have communed with Him, He will know where to find the place of burial. And God was with every one of our missing lads to the last, and He knows the narrow bed in which each lies sleeping. The grave may have no cross above it, but it will often feel the tread of an angel's feet as he comes to plant poppies, primroses or daffodils above the brave.

‘IT MUST BE SUNDAY’

THE Psalmist of Israel tells us that God has ‘ordained’ the moon and the stars. These ‘flaming fires’ are ‘ministers of His that do His pleasure.’ Nor are they the only clergy chosen from Nature. Mungo Park having lain down in the desert to die notices beside him a tiny flower, and it awakens hope in him. The winter of his despair is ended. He rises again, and pushes on until he finds a human habitation where he is cared for by native women as though he were their brother. The little flower had been ‘ordained’ to minister hope to a lost and despairing traveller. At the Front such ministering by Nature to man has been common. ‘No Man’s Land’ is desolate enough to look upon, but there is life there and music. Larks have chosen it for their nests, and amid its desolation they rear their young. Even the pheasants have not forsaken some parts of it. If we could know the thoughts of the wounded who have lain out there waiting for death we should find that the moon and the stars, the birds and the field mice, had not let them die without a comforting of the spirit.

Last Sunday our regiment was resting in reserve trenches after a period in the firing line. It was a beautiful evening, and as the sun sank westward I administered the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

The day was far spent and, as the bread was broken, there came to us a vision of the Face which the two disciples saw on another such evening at Emmaus. On the way back to my billet I met a platoon of Royal Engineers returning from the baths. One of them had been a member of my church in London, and he dropped out to talk with me. Those who have not been in the Expeditionary Force can hardly understand the pleasure we feel when we meet some one whom we knew in the days of peace, or even some one who knows the street or town out of which we came. He was full of talk, and as I listened his excitement and pleasure bubbled over like a spring.

‘Last night,’ he said, ‘was the night of my life. I never expected to see daylight again. Talk about “tight corners,” there was never one to match it, and as you know, my chums and I have been in many. The Huns simply plastered us with shells. The bombardment was terrific. It was like being in a hailstorm, and we expected every moment to be our last. You know the trench which the infantry took yesterday? Well, we were there. We went up at dark to fix barbed wire in front of it ready for the counter-attack. We were out in “No Man’s Land” for about two hours, working as swiftly and silently as we could. Whenever they sent Very lights up we laid down, and so far we had escaped notice and were congratulating ourselves that the work was nearly done, and that our skins were still whole. Then, somehow, the Germans “spotted” us, and let fire. It was like hell let loose. We ran to the trench for shelter, but it seemed as if nothing could shelter us from such a deluge of shells.

It was just like being naked in a driving snowstorm. We felt as if there was no trench at all, and it seemed as if the gunners could see us in the dark. After that experience I can pity a hare with a pack of hounds after it. But we just sat tight with such cover as we had and made the best of it. There was nothing else to do. If we were to be killed we should be killed. Nothing that we could do would make any difference. Yet, though there didn't seem shelter for even a mouse against such a shower of shells only one of us was hit, and that was the sergeant. He was rather badly "done in," and we could only save his life by getting him quickly to the dressing-station. I am one of the taller and stronger men of my platoon, so, of course, I volunteered as a stretcher-bearer. There was no communication trench, so we had no choice but to lift him out of the trench and make a dash across the open. They were shelling like blazes, but we dared not delay because, if we were overtaken by daylight, it would be impossible to get him away till the next night, and by then he would be dead. So we talked it over, and decided to try our luck. We had just lifted him up when a shell burst right on top of us, and knocked us all down. For a minute or two I was unconscious, and when I came round I thought I must surely be wounded, so I ran my fingers over my body, but found neither blood nor a rent in my clothes. I was covered with chalk, but that didn't matter. Except for a bit of concussion of the brain I was none the worse, and soon pulled myself together. The sergeant was a sight! He was half-buried, and we couldn't see him for chalk, but we soon dug him out and got him on the stretcher

again. After that we sat down in the bottom of the trench till the effect of the shock had worn off a bit, for we all felt like rats that had been shaken by a terrier. Then, as suddenly as it had started, the shelling stopped. The calm that followed was wonderful. I never felt anything so restful before. It was like the delicious restfulness that sometimes immediately follows hours of fever. Then, as if to make it perfect, a lark rose out of "No Man's Land" and began to sing. The effect on us was magical. It was the sweetest music I have ever heard, and I shall remember it to my dying day. The countryside was dark and silent, and, as I listened to the lark, old days came back to mind. You remember that Saturday midnight in the June before the War, when you took us into Epping Forest to see the dawn break over it? Well, as I listened to the lark, I was back there in the forest. Then, some impulse came to me and, hardly knowing what I did, I exclaimed aloud, "Why, bless me, it must be Sunday," and so it was, though I had forgotten. Then we jumped up, for we saw that the dawn was breaking, and, lifting the sergeant out of the trench, we rushed across the open ground in the direction of the dressing-station. Talk about "feeling protected"! Why, I felt that God was all around us, and that no harm could touch us. A great calm came over me, and I felt utterly without fear. We had, as you know, to bring the sergeant some two miles to the dressing-station, just down the road there, but we got him safely in, and I think he will get better.'

While we were talking a shell burst near the trench where my men had been partaking of the Sacrament,

and another burst by the roadside close to the Engineers. With a laugh and a hearty 'good-night' the youth shook hands, saluted, and ran on to rejoin his comrades. The shells were part of the game. In London we had been in the same football team. He had kept goal and I had played 'full back,' and he regarded the shells that had fallen as bad shots by the opposing team. They might have been serious, but, as it happened, the ball had each time gone 'out of play.' I waited a minute or two in the hope of getting a lift. A motor car came along; I stopped it and jumped in; for at the Front everything is Government property, and more or less at our service. I found myself sitting by the side of a private who had been wounded in the face and right hand by the shell that had just fallen near the platoon of Engineers. He had left his horse with a comrade, and was being driven to the advanced dressing-station by a driver who, happening to pass at the moment, had kindly offered him a lift. After a little wait at the dressing-station I got on the front of an ambulance car. There were only two cases inside, and they were being taken to the main dressing-station in Arras. One of them had his feet and arms tied to the stretcher, for he was suffering from shell-shock; and three orderlies were in charge of him. The poor fellow laughed and cried alternately, and struggled to break loose. 'I'm a British soldier,' he cried, 'and I will not be tied up. I've done my bit, and this is the way you pay me out. I will not have it.' And time and again he struggled desperately to break away. The R.A.M.C. orderlies were wise and tactful as women. They asked him questions

about the fight, and he fought his battle over again. They praised his regiment and told him it had done magnificently, and he laughed and chuckled like a young mother dandling her first baby on her knee. And so, without mishap, we reached the ruined town of Arras, where nightly the shells fall among the forsaken houses in which our soldiers are billeted. He was carried into the hospital, and I walked away to my room in an adjoining street.

So ended the day which, at its dawn, the lark had told the young engineer ' must be Sunday.'

‘YOUNG CROPS KEEP OFF’

WE were nearing the end of a long march when the whole regiment burst into derisive laughter. A notice-board on the right of the road had caught the men's fancy. It bore the words, 'Young crops keep off.' Whether the young crops were being admonished to keep off the soldiers or the soldiers to keep off the young crops seemed open to doubt. It had evidently been painted by a Frenchman who had but a passing acquaintance with the English language—the little knowledge which is a dangerous thing. He had, metaphorically speaking, put the cart before the horse. The soldiers knew what he wished to say, and, with that fine consideration which has made them so popular in France, they responded to his request; but, being Cockneys, than whom none is more quick to see a joke, they must have a laugh at the farmer's expense. Laughter at the Front is not a thing to be missed. It is as much needed, and as refreshing, as a well in the desert. The most destructive war in history was raging a few miles away, and the noise of the guns mingled with the sound of our laughter. The villages on our right had been destroyed, and thousands of acres of corn-land were lying waste. Amid such almost universal destruction a little more or less seemed of no account, and yet the

farmer's words were wise, and of importance both to him and us. This is a farmer's war as much as a soldier's. It is a war of exhaustion, and a few corn-fields may decide the issue as a few bites of bread decided the fate of Scott's Antarctic party. The more fields the enemy has destroyed the more careful we must be of those which remain. The farmer had faith in France and faith in us. He had ploughed and sown in hope. If our army broke rank, his fields would be overrun by the greedy foe, as when the dykes of Holland break before the sea. But he had no misgiving. He was sowing for France and not for the Locusts that have eaten up Belgium, Serbia, Roumania, and Russia, and he drove his plough as defiantly as ever Joan of Arc flew her flag. His plough was the symbol of the faith that was in him. He was doing 'his bit,' and knew that he could rely on our co-operation. But he knew also that we are mostly young, and not bred to farming, and that, in pure thoughtlessness, we might hinder him in his work. He, therefore, appealed to us to keep our horses off the young crops while still doing our greater work of keeping the Germans off. He did not use the threat, 'Trespassers will be prosecuted.' An appeal to our honour and goodwill would, he knew, be enough. It is worthy of note that our soldiers have shown the most scrupulous care of French property, and have never taken the liberties with it that they would take with property in England. They never forget that they are guests in France. They pay amply for all they take, and pay full and immediate compensation for any damage done unwittingly or for military reasons. I remember our men playing

football on a field that they mistakenly thought had been set aside for the purpose. A complaint was lodged the next day, and each player was called on to recompense the farmer. It is the recognised thing. The result is that when we leave a district the people are generally sorry to see us go. A French interpreter said to me on one occasion, ' Our people would rather have you than us billeted on them. They sometimes tell us they will be glad to see " the blue coats " again, but it is a mere compliment. We know quite well that they prefer to have the English.' Probably in England ' the blue coats ' would have the preference, but, at any rate, it shows that our soldiers do not abuse the hospitality offered them. The farmer whose notice-board amused us knew quite well that his request would be gladly granted.

And he gained something by his error in phrasing. The novelty of it made us draw one another's attention to it ; and our laughter was evidence that the words had gone home to the mind and had been indelibly impressed on the memory. Had his appeal been in correct English few would have noticed it. Most men owe a great deal to their mistakes—more than they will generally acknowledge. Error, in many cases, is simply the truth upside down. We have got hold of the stick at the wrong end. And the main thing is to get hold of the stick, for, that done, it is more than likely we shall turn it round until we get hold of it aright. The man who fears to make a mistake, and shrinks from picking up the stick lest he should get hold of the dirty end, is not the most likely one to find the truth. Walking is, as I think Emerson says,

merely falling forward. Bunyan's Christian fell into the Slough of Despond, but it was a forward fall, and he would get to the Celestial City sooner than one who merely stood still lest he should fall. It is with our actions as with our thoughts. The man who stands at the four cross-roads afraid of making a mistake will never get home, but the man who dares to blunder will get on to the right road, if only by the mere process of elimination. Each time he takes the wrong road he draws nearer the right one. It is better to make wrong decisions than to develop infirmity of will through fear of making mistakes. When we have found out the wrong way we are very near to knowing which is the right one. Many a literary man has stultified himself by being afraid of mistakes. He is too critical to be creative. Had he been in our French farmer's position he would have put up no notice at all lest his English should be faulty. And so the summer of his life passes without any production worth calling a harvest. We laughed at the farmer, but he conveyed his message and kept us off the crops. And that was the great thing. John Bunyan used short words, but they were in many cases too long for him to spell correctly, and were left for the printer to put right. And Burns tells us that he had to leave his punctuation for the publisher's revision. But each had a message, and delivered it undeterred by the fear of making mistakes in the minor matters. 'To err is human,' and we ought to be content with being human. We may buy perfection too dearly. We may plume our feathers till we cannot fly. One cannot help feeling that certain authors of considerable

note have been so busy polishing their style that they have forgotten to say anything.

The farmer's appeal was local and limited to his crops, but the part may include the whole, just as an acorn holds within itself an oak. A man is a microcosm of the whole world, as Sir Thomas Browne has already said. Burns and Bunyan wrote truly of what they had felt and seen, and though their experiences were strictly individual and local, when their writings were sent out into the world they proved that the authors had voiced universal sentiments and experiences, and they are read among all classes and in nearly all countries. The tinker would not have been invited to a duke's dinner, but he is welcomed to many a duke's library, and, when the world is shut out, the duke and the tinker grow very intimate. The lord and the labourer alike find themselves in Burns. When a man shows his own heart he shows all men's hearts, and when he speaks truthfully for himself he speaks for all. We are all made of much the same stuff, and though our circumstances vary the total effect of the outer world on our inner life is much the same. The differences are superficial. The polar and the grizzly bears are, in essentials, alike; the effect of differing climates and circumstances merely alters the colour of their skins. When we get below the skin we cannot tell a tinker from a duke. The French farmer's admonitions made no reference to anything beyond his own fields and his own true needs, but because he spoke the truth about one thing he spoke it about many; for the world is one, and there is a unity in all life. 'He that is faithful over a few things shall be made ruler

over many things.' His words apply to his own farm, but they apply no less to his country—and ours. They refer to material things, but they are as applicable to spiritual things. If we do not keep off both his and all farmers' young crops for some years to come we shall have famine stalking through our lands. And when we turn to the War's darkest side, and view the appalling destruction of young life, his words take on a meaning which he little considered when he wrote them. In three years of war millions of young men have perished. We read the casualty lists daily, but it is impossible for any imagination to realize the irreparable loss which the race has suffered in every department of its life, material and spiritual. Even our faulty, dim envisaging of the fact is making us turn with anxious eyes from the casualty columns of our newspapers to the births columns; and from the dangers that hang over the trenches to those that threaten the cradle. It has been discovered since the War that it is more dangerous for young children in our homes than for young men at the Front; and that the percentage of deaths among babies is greater than among soldiers in the field. The highest authorities in England have declared that one thousand children die each week who ought to live, and would live but for our ignorance and carelessness. A 'Baby Week' has been instituted to call the people to arms against the awful Monster that is trampling down the young and tender crops of human life. Yet it is easier to rouse the multitude against cattle-maimers. A Ministry of Health has been proposed, but the work does not go on with the fierce energy which the facts

demand. Wiser and greater educational arrangements are to be made, so that the bodies and souls of the children may be wisely cared for and cultivated, but they are as inadequate as the arrangements made by the Lilliputians for Gulliver. Millions of children in our slums are dirty, ill-fed, and ill-clothed, and their cries are smothered. They do not reach us in our comfortable homes. They perish by thousands; and the newspapers, which can afford scores of columns to a single murder by Crippen, are silent about the multitudes who ought to live but die. Is there no one with trumpet voice who will bid the enemies of child-life keep off? Is there no Wilberforce or Lincoln to save these little white slaves of our own blood and our own cities? Let him, like the French farmer, demand the sparing of these young crops that have sprung from human love and suffering; and let him speak, in good English or bad, so that he make himself understood and heeded; for who cares about the tone of the fire alarm so long as it rouses the sleeper?

And when we pass from the national life to the individual, and from the outer to the inner life, the French farmer's warning is not exhausted. There are tender shoots in every heart that need protection. The foot of the cynic and the unclean can easily destroy them. Men are often better than they pretend to be. It is a strange and disturbing fact. They believe in religion and purity, in love and chivalry, and yet in the mess-room or office they pretend to a cynicism they do not feel, and to a meaner life than they practise. There is danger lest the assumed become the real, and lest we act a part until we identify ourselves with it.

Even at our best we are not what we meant to be. Some of the tender crops have been trampled on. We have lost our ideals, and life is a meaner thing, and the world a duller place, because these lights have gone out or are only flickering dimly. It was a dark and sad hour when Saul, before his last and losing battle, looked upon the shade of Samuel. It is not less dark and sad when the shade of our boyhood meets us in manhood and, in tones more of sorrow than anger, tells us that we are kings who have lost our crowns.

OUR TOMMIES NEVER FAIL US

ON Easter Monday, in the Battle of Arras, I saw two sights such as a beholder never forgets. One revealed the kind and forgiving spirit of our men, and the other their unflinching courage. After burying three non-commissioned officers who had been killed the day before, I reached the advanced dressing-station, near which our regiment was 'standing to' in a support trench. Other regiments of our Division were carrying out the attack and, with small loss, had taken the enemy lines. The German trenches had been blotted out by our shells, but their deep dug-outs, with machine guns at their mouths, remained untouched, and it was almost impossible for our soldiers to discover them until they got within a few yards of the entrances. The German commander's idea was to keep his men in the shelter of the dug-outs until our barrage lifted. They were then to rush out with machine guns and rifles to destroy our men who were following it up. If the idea had been carried out the German line would have been impregnable, for our men would have been mown down like corn before the reaper. It failed because German human nature could not rise to the occasion. The German soldiers had been demoralized by the safety of the dug-outs and by the thunder of our shells above them. They cowered in the dug-outs when they should have rushed out. The

critical moment passed, and with its passing, our soldiers leapt to the entrances and threw down hand grenades. There was a wild cry of pain and fear from below. Arms went up and the cry 'Kamerad.' The surrender was accepted, and the beaten soldiers crawled out. From some dug-outs as many as two hundred prisoners were taken. In other parts of the line there was a stiff fight, but, on the whole, our casualties were very light. From my own observation I should say, that we took more prisoners than we suffered casualties. Some companies could boast a prisoner for each man engaged in the attack.

The advanced dressing-station was at the corner of cross-roads, and the sight around it was wonderful to see. A crowd of prisoners was assembling ready to be marched to the cages, and wounded officers and men, British and German, were being bandaged. The prisoners were hungry. For some days our artillery had cut off their rations. A platoon of our soldiers came marching by, and, to save time, they were eating their breakfast as they passed along. The prisoners looked at them with hungry eyes. Our men saw the look and stopped. Breaking rank for a moment, they passed in and out among the prisoners and shared out their rations. 'Here, Fritz, old boy, take this,' I heard all around me, and Fritz did not need asking twice. He took the biscuits and cheese gratefully and greedily. The look of trouble passed out of his eyes, and he felt that he had found friends where he had only expected to find enemies. He began to hope for kindness in his captivity. The scene was one of pure goodwill and even merriment. I have scarcely ever seen a crowd

so happy. Our Tommies laughed and cracked jokes which no German could understand, but I heard not a single taunt or bitter word. In fact, Fritz was treated more like a pet than a prisoner. One who had worked in London, and who spoke English, asked me for a cup of tea for a comrade who was slightly wounded, and I got one in the dressing-station. The platoon of Tommies re-formed and marched away to the battle, and the prisoners were led off to the cages. There were still large numbers of prisoners on the road, and they were moving about without guards. Many of them were being used as stretcher-bearers, and they seemed to do their work of goodwill and not of constraint. Their assistance was of great help to the wounded. The battle was going well with us. Every one felt in good heart and kindly disposed. An officer, who lay seriously wounded and waiting for a car, told me of the splendid work which the Durhams had done. His eyes shone with suppressed excitement and pride as he told the story. While he was speaking two soldiers came limping down the road, and their appearance was greeted with a burst of laughter. One of them was English and the other German. Tommy had his arm round the German's neck and was leaning on him, while Fritz, with his arm round the lad's waist, helped him along. They came along very slowly, for both were wounded, but they laughed and talked together like long lost brothers. Yet neither could understand a word of the other.

I passed down the road towards the line. The gunners of the 56th Division of London Territorials were hurriedly hitching their guns to the horses, ready

to advance to new positions. In the ruined village a party of engineers was already unloading a wagon of rails with which to build a light railway. I continued along the road towards the next village. It had just fallen into our hands and not one stone was left on another. There were scores of wounded men hobbling back from it, and I gave my arm to such as needed it most. A seriously wounded youth was brought along on a wheeler by two R.A.M.C. orderlies, and as I helped them through the traffic we heard the heavy rumble of the field guns advancing. The road was cleared with the quickness of lightning. Out of the village the batteries burst at a mad gallop, and down the road they came at break-neck speed. With the swiftness of a fire engine in the city street the rocking guns swept past. The gunners clung to the ammunition limbers with both hands, and the drivers whipped and spurred the excited foam-flecked horses as though they were fiery beings leaping through the air and incapable of fatigue or weakness. Suddenly the drivers raised their whips as a sign to those behind, and the trembling horses and bounding guns came to a dead halt. The leading gun had overturned at a nasty place where the road dipped down into the hollow. The rest of the batteries stood exposed on the crest of the ridge. Before retiring the Germans had felled all the trees that grew by the roadside so that nothing might spoil their line of vision. Such a catastrophe as this was what they had been hoping for. The sunshine was brilliant and our batteries were a direct target for the enemy gunners, one such as seldom occurs. We knew only too well what it meant. We were caught like rats in a trap. By the

side of the road ran a shallow trench and near us two broad steps into it. We therefore laid the wounded lad in the bottom of the trench and sat down by his side. Shells were falling all around and fountains of dirt and debris rose into the air and, on five or six occasions, covered us with their spray. I had therefore to cover the lad's face. He was barely conscious and uttered no word. It seemed as if nothing could live in such a bombardment. A shell burst on the road, and the cry of dying horses rent the air. The traces were cut and the horses and gun-carriage drawn off the road. Every second I expected to see the horses and drivers in front of me blown into the air, and I watched them with fascinated eyes. Not a man stirred. They sat on their horses and gun-carriages as though they were figures in bronze. Not a man sought the trench, and not a man relieved the tension by going forward to see what was wrong or to lend a hand. Each knew his place, and if death sought him it would know where to find him. The horses felt that they had brave men on their backs and, in that mysterious way peculiar to horses, caught the spirit of their riders. Every shell covered men and horses with chalk and soil, but they remained as immobile as the wax figures in Madame Tussaud's. It was magnificent and it was war. A driver in the battery beside us got wounded in the leg and hand. He jumped off his horse and came to us to be bandaged. Then he leapt back into the saddle. It seemed an age, but I suppose it was only a few minutes, before the obstruction was removed. The whips flashed in the air and the horses sprang forward. The guns rocked and swayed as they swept past us, and within a few minutes

they were in their new positions under the hill upon which lay the ruins of Neuville Vitasse. The shelling ceased as suddenly as it had started, and we lifted out our wounded soldier and went in the direction of the dressing-station. Some distance up the road my attention was called to one of the drivers whom the artillery had left in the care of some privates. He was living, but his skull was broken, and he would never wake again to consciousness. He was fast 'going West.' His day was over and his work was done. I got him lifted on to a stretcher and taken to the dressing-station, so that he might die in peace and be buried in the little soldiers' cemetery behind it.

When I returned in the evening to our billet I told the transport officer of the magnificent behaviour of the R.F.A. drivers. 'Any other drivers would behave just as well if caught in the same trap,' he replied. It was the simple truth he spoke. They would. Such supreme courage and devotion to duty are common to the army. Their presence among all ranks and in all sections of the army makes the fact the more wonderful. Our officers and men love life, but they love duty more, and our commanders in drawing up their plans know that they can rely on their soldiers to carry them out. Our Tommies never fail us, whether in France, the Dardanelles, Mesopotamia, or Palestine. Devotion to duty seems inwoven with the fibres of their hearts, and Nelson's signal seems ever before their eyes. Truly there is nothing wrong with the *moral* teaching of our schools. It develops men who, in kindness to captives and courage amid disaster and death, never fail us.

THE CHILDREN OF OUR DEAD

HERE are times when we get away from the Front for a rest. We hear no more the sound of the guns, but give ourselves up to the silence and charm of the country. Before going again into the Somme fighting we were billeted for ten days in the neighbouring village to Crecy ; and as the anniversary of the battle came that week the colonel chose the day for a march to the battlefield. The owner of the field where the old windmill stood, from which our English King, Edward III, directed his army, came to meet us and describe the battle. When the war is over he is going to erect a monument on the spot to the memory of the French and British troops who in comradeship have died fighting against the common foe. They were happy days that we spent around Crecy. The last that some were destined to know this side of the Great Divide. The bedroom next to mine was occupied by two fine young officers of utterly different types. One was a Greek, whose father had taken out naturalization papers, and loved England with a worshipping passion that would shame many native born. He was winsome, mystical and careless. The other officer was a charming, argumentative, systematic theological student of Scots parentage. The night before we left, the Greek accidentally broke his mirror and was much upset. It was, he said, a token that Death was about

to claim him. The other laughed heartily, for he had not a trace of the superstitious in him, or, at least, it was kept under, which is more likely, by his strong reasoning faculties. 'If you are to be killed,' he replied, 'I am to be killed too, for I also have broken my mirror.' He spoke the words in jest, or with a hardly discernible undercurrent of seriousness; but they were true words nevertheless. The two bed-mates were killed in the same battle a week or two later. I had tea with them in their dug-out on the eve of it. They were to take up their positions in an hour, but Johnson could not resist having just one more argument. He drew the conversation to the 'New Theology,' and to German philosophers and Biblical scholars. He simply talked me off my feet, for he had the most brilliant intellect in the regiment, combined with self-reliance and perfect modesty. Then the conversation turned to the question of taking a tot of rum before going over the parapet. He was a rigid teetotaler, for, said he, 'drink is the ruin of my country.' He was opposed to the idea of taking rum to help his courage or still his fears. He would not, he said, go to death with his eyes bandaged. He would take a good look at Death and dare him to do his worst. He was superb, and Death never felled a manlier man. Browning would have loved him as his own soul.

He had exactly Browning's attitude to life, and could have sung with him,

'Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids not sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!

Strive, and hold cheap the strain ;
 Learn, nor account the pang ; dare, never grudge the
 throe.'

And his attitude to death is perfectly described in
 Browning's ' Prospice ' :—

' Fear death ? . . .
 I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
 The best and the last !
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
 And bade me creep past.
 No ! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
 The heroes of old,
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
 Of pain, darkness, and cold.
 For sudden the worst turns best to the brave,
 The black minute 's at end,
 And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,
 Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
 Then a light . . .
 And with God be the rest ! '

He was found with his ' body against the wall where
 the forts of folly fall.' His brave, intelligent face was
 completely blown away. His Greek friend was wounded,
 and while being dressed in a shell-hole by his servant
 was hit again and killed. Weeks later all that remained
 of the regiment was drawn out to a little village some
 miles from Amiens, and very similar to the one we had
 occupied near Crecy. We were taken to it in motor
 'buses, for the men were too exhausted to march, and
 the days spent there were days of delight. We had a
 glorious crowded-out service on the Sunday. It was
 both a thanksgiving and a memorial service, and I spoke

to the men on 'The Passing of the Angels.' Luke ii. 15. 'When the music ceased,' I said, 'and the herald angels departed, the sky became very empty, cold and grey to the shepherds; and they said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem." And they went and found out Jesus. If the angels had stayed the shepherds would have stayed with them. The angels had to come to point them to Jesus, but, that done, they had to go away to make the shepherds desire Jesus and seek Him. "When the half-gods go the gods appear." The angels had to make room for Jesus, and the second best had to yield place to the best. When John the Baptist was beheaded his disciples went in their sorrow to Jesus, and having lost our noble comrades we also must go to Him. The best in our friends came from Jesus as the sweet light of the moon comes from the sun; and we must go to the source. If we find and keep to Jesus, sooner or later we shall find our lost friends again, for "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him!"' In some such words I tried to comfort those who had left their comrades behind in the graves on the Somme; for I know how deeply they feel the loss of chums. During the week we had dinner parties and all kinds of jolly social intercourse. It was amusing to see the delight every one felt at having a bed to sleep in. 'Look, Padre, at these white sheets,' an officer cried as I passed his window. He was as merry over them as if a rich maiden aunt had remembered him in her will. Some got 'leave' home, and were so frankly joyful about it that it made us both glad and envious. We made up for it somewhat by getting leave to spend an occasional day in Amiens.

There I went into the glorious cathedral. Almost the whole of the front was sandbagged, but even thus it was a 'thing of beauty' and has become to me a 'joy for ever.' Except Rouen Cathedral, I have seen nothing to equal it. Notre Dame, with its invisible yet clinging tapestry of history, is more deeply moving. But it is sadder and more sombre. Something of the ugliness and tragedy of history peeps out in it, but Amiens Cathedral is a thing of pure joy and beauty. It suggests fairies, while Notre Dame suggests goblins. While I was looking at its glorious rose-windows, which were casting their rich colours on the pillars, a father and his two children came in. Father and son dipped their fingers in the shell of holy water, crossed their foreheads and breasts with the water, and were passing on; but the little girl, who was too short to reach the shell, took hold of her father's arm and pulled him back. She too wished to dip her fingers in holy water and make the sign of the cross over her mind and heart. The father yielded to her importunity and touched with his wet fingers her hand. She made the sacred sign and was satisfied. The father and son had remembered their own needs but forgotten the child's. After all the tragic happenings on the Somme why should this little incident linger in my memory like a primrose in a crater? Did it not linger *because* of the tragedy of the preceding weeks? I had been living weeks together without seeing a child, and after the slaughter of youth which I had witnessed the sight of a child in a cathedral was inexpressibly beautiful. The father's neglect of its finer needs gave me pain. We have lost so many young men that every child and youth left to us ought to be

cared for as the apple of our eye. We have lost more than our young men. We have lost those who would have been their children. The little ones who might have been have gone to their graves with their fathers. The old recruiting cry, 'the young and single first,' was necessary from a military standpoint, but I could never see much justice in it from a purely human point of view. The young had no responsibility, direct or indirect, for the war. They were given life, and yet before they could taste it they were called upon to die on our behalf. We who are older have tasted of life and love; the rest of our years will be much the same as the former; there will be little surprise or newness of experience. Perhaps, too, we have living memorials of ourselves, so that if we die our personality and name will still live on in others. Our death will only be partial. When Pitt was Prime Minister could it be said that Chatham was dead? His body was dead, truly, but his soul was heard in the House of Commons every time his son spoke, and Napoleon felt the strength of his arm as truly as Montcalm had felt it on the Heights of Abraham. I should not have mourned the loss of the Scot and the young Greek so much had they left to the world some image and likeness of themselves.

' From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripener should by time decrease,
The tender heir might bear his memory.'

But the young Scotsman and the Greek gave more than themselves to death :—

' Those who would have been
Their sons they gave—their immortality.'

After a summer on the Somme I could understand how fear of the devouring maw of Time had become almost an obsession with Shakespeare. Death had taken from him some of the dearest intimates of his heart, and taken them young. And so, like the sound of a funeral-bell echoing down the lane where lovers walk, there is heard through all his sonnets and poems of love the approaching footsteps of Death. Sometimes the footsteps sound faintly, but they are seldom absent. How then would he have felt in a war like this, in which the 'young and single' have gone out by the hundred thousand to die?

Others, however, who have given their lives were married men, and they have left images of themselves in trust to the nation. We know the last thoughts of a dying father. Captain Scott, as he lay dying at the South Pole, has expressed them for all time. 'Take care of the boy,' he said, 'there should be good stuff in him.' He found comfort in the reflection that he would, though he died, live on in his son; but he was saddened by the thought that the son would have to face the battle of life without a father to back him up. The boy would therefore need special 'care.' How great is the handicap can only be known by those whose fathers died young and by those who have had to be father, as well as mother, to a child.

On the evening of the first battle of the Somme I spoke to a young officer as he lay in a bed at the Field Ambulance. He had lost his right arm, and he told me how it had happened. He was charging across 'No Man's Land' when a shell cut it off near the shoulder and flung it several yards away. As he saw it fall to

the ground the sight so overcame him that he cried aloud in distress, 'Oh my arm! My beautiful arm.' He was still mourning its loss, so, to comfort him, I told him that Nelson lost *his* right arm and won the Battle of Trafalgar after he had lost it. Like Nelson, I said, he would learn to write with the left hand and still do 'a man's job.' He would not be useless in life as he feared. When the children of our dead soldiers charge across 'No Man's Land' in the battle of life they will think of their lost fathers, and the agonizing cry of the young wounded soldier will rise to their lips, 'Oh my arm! My beautiful arm.' The State is providing artificial arms for our wounded soldiers. Will it be a right arm to the children of its dead? Will it be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow? Unless it is ready for this sacred task it had no right to ask for and accept the lives of these men. The State, with the help of the Church, must resolve that no child shall suffer because its father was a hero and patriot. The State must help the child to the shell of holy water without the little one having to pull at its arm to remind it of its duties. If the children of our dead soldiers lack education, food, moral and spiritual guidance, or a proper start in business, no words will be black enough to describe the nation's crime and ingratitude. They are the sons and daughters of brave and patriotic men and there 'should be good stuff' in them. It is the nation's privilege as well as duty to look after them in place of their fathers.

A few days before Easter I walked into Arras from the neighbouring village. There were guns all along the road, and there was not a house but bore the mark

of shells. Some of the civilians had remained, but they were mostly old people who could not settle elsewhere, and who preferred to die at home rather than live in a strange place. One house impressed me greatly. It had been badly damaged, but its garden was untouched, and in it were half a dozen rose-trees. It was the beginning of spring, and each tree was covered over with sacking to preserve it from frost and from fragments of shells. The owner cared too little for his own life to move away, but he cared for the life of his roses. And so, when the summer came, there were roses in at least one garden in Arras. The noise of the guns was terrific, and the old man had to live in the cellar, but he found leisure of soul to cultivate his roses. His action was one of the bravest and most beautiful things I have seen in the war. The children of England are more beautiful than Arras roses and more difficult to rear. May we trust old England not to neglect them? Will she save them from the mark of the shell, and help them to grow up to a full and perfect loveliness? Our dying soldiers have trusted her to do it. From their graves they plead—

‘ If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies blow
In Flanders fields.’

A FUNERAL UNDER FIRE

IT was in a ruined village behind the trenches. A fatigue party had just come out of the line and was on its way to rest-billets in the next village. The men were tired, so they sat down to rest in the deserted street. Suddenly, a scream, as from a disembodied spirit, pierced the air. There was a crash, a cloud of smoke, and five men lay dead on the pavement and twelve wounded. In the morning I was asked to bury one of the dead. Under a glorious July sky a Roman Catholic chaplain and I cycled between desolate fields into the village. A rifleman guided us down a communication trench till we came to the cemetery. It was a little field fenced with trees. There we found a Church of England chaplain. He and the Catholic chaplain had two each to bury. A burial party was at work on the five graves. It was the same fatigue party as on the evening before, and they were preparing the last resting-place of those who had died at their side. What thoughts theirs must have been! They worked rapidly, for all the morning the village had been under a bombardment which had not yet ceased. Before they had finished they were startled by the familiar but fatal scream of a shell, and threw themselves on the ground. It burst a little way off without doing harm, and they went on with their work as if nothing had happened. When the graves were ready, two of the

bodies were brought out and lowered with ropes. The Church of England chaplain read the burial service over them, and we all stood round as mourners. Two more bodies were brought out, and we formed a circle round them while the Roman Catholic chaplain read the burial service—chiefly in Latin. There now remained but one, and he was quietly lowered into his grave. He was still wearing his boots and uniform and was wrapt round with his blanket.

‘ No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Nor in sheet nor in shroud we wound him ;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.’

All his comrades who had been with him in the dread hour of death were mourning by his grave, and there were standing with them his officer and the two chaplains. I read the full service as it is given in our Prayer Book. It was all that one could do for him. The Catholic chaplain had sprinkled consecrated water on the bodies, and I sprinkled consecrated soil. Was it not in truth holy soil? Behind me was one long common grave in which lay buried a hundred and ten French soldiers; ‘ 110 Braves ’ was the inscription the cross bore. In front of me were three rows of graves in which were lying British soldiers. French and British soldiers were mingling their dust. In death, as in life, they were not divided. Prayers had been offered up for the other four that their souls might rest in peace and acceptance with God. But I felt led to offer no prayer for the lad at my feet nor for his dead comrades. He needed no prayer of mine, rather I needed his. He

was safe home in port. The storm had spent itself, and rock, nor fog, nor fire would trouble him again ; but his comrades and I were still out in the storm and battling towards the land. He had no need of us, but his parents and comrades had need of him. We were there to pay a tribute to his life and death, to pray for his relatives, and to learn how frail we are and how dependent upon Him who is beyond the reach of the chances and changes of this mortal life.

I was in the middle of the last prayer, ' We bless Thy Holy Name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear,' when that fatal scream, as of a vulture darting down on its prey, again tore the air. The men, as they had been taught, dropped to the ground like stones. My office demanded that I should continue the prayer, and leave with God the decision as to how it should end. There was a crash, and the branches of the trees trembled as fragments of shell smote them, but there was nothing more. The men rose as quickly as they had fallen, and all were reverently standing to attention before the last words of the prayer found utterance. The graves were filled in and we went our several ways. Next day white crosses were placed over the five mounds, and we bade them a long and last farewell.

A SOLDIERS' CALVARY

THERE is one afternoon on the Somme that stands out in my memory like a dark hill when the sun has sunk below the verge and left a lingering bar of red across the sky. It was a Calvary thick with the bodies of our men. I was looking for the Westminsters, and they were difficult to find. I passed over one trench and reached another. There I asked the men if they knew where the Westminsters were, and they expressed the opinion that the regiment was in the trench ahead. There was no communication trench, so I followed for some distance a fatigue-party which was marching in single file and carrying hand grenades to the firing line. They turned to the right and I kept straight on. Every few yards I passed rifles reversed and fastened in the ground by their bayonets. They marked the graves of the dead. A few soldiers but newly killed were still lying out. At last I reached a trench and found in it a number of Westminsters. They were signallers on special duty, and they told me that I had already passed the regiment on the left. The poor fellows were in a sad plight. The weather was cold and they were without shelter. There were German dug-outs, but they were partly blown in and full of German dead. The stench that rose from them, and from the shallow graves around, was almost unbearable. Yet there, amid falling shells, the lads had

to remain day and night. Their rations were brought to them, but as every ounce of food and drop of water, in addition to the letters from home, had to be brought on pack mules through seven or eight miles of field tracks in which the mules struggled on up to the knees in sticky mud and sometimes up to the belly, it was impossible for the regiment to receive anything beyond water and 'iron rations,' *i.e.* hard biscuits. The water was so precious that not a drop could be spared with which to wash the face or clean the teeth; and I always took my own water-bottle and food to avoid sharing the scanty supplies of the officers. After a little time with the signallers, I moved up the trench and looked in at the little dug-out of the Q.V.R. Colonel. All the officers present were sitting on the floor, and they were bearded almost beyond recognition; but the enemy had left a small red electric lamp which added an almost absurd touch of luxury to the miserable place. Farther up the trench I found the Brigade Staff Captain in a similar dug-out, and after making inquiries as to the position of the 1st Queen's Westminster Rifles, which was my objective, I left to find it, for the sun was already setting. The path was across the open fields and the saddest I have ever trod. I was alone and had but little idea of location, but it was impossible to miss the path. On the right and left it was marked at every few steps with dead men. Most of them were still grasping their rifles. They had fallen forward as they rushed over the ground, and their faces, their poor, blackened, lipless faces, were towards the foe. There had been, as yet, no opportunity to bury them, for the ground was still being shelled, and the burial parties had been all

too busily engaged in other parts of the field. I longed to search for their identity discs that I might know who they were and make a note of the names ; but I had to leave it to the burial party. I was already feeling sick with the stench in the trench and the sights on the way, and lacked the strength to look for the discs round the wrists and necks of their poor decomposed bodies. It had to be left to men of the burial party, whose nerves were somewhat more hardened to the task by other experiences of the kind. It was a new calvary on which I was standing. These poor bodies, miles from home, and with no woman's hands to perform the last offices of affection, were lying there as the price of the world's freedom. They seemed to say :—

' We are the dead : short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved—and now we lie
In France's fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe !
To you with failing hands we throw
The torch : be yours to hold it high !
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies blow
In France's fields.'

Would that all who talk glibly of freedom and justice might have seen them that they might realize the spiritual depths of liberty and righteousness, and the high cost at which they are won for the race. It is fatally easy to persuade ourselves that there is no need for us to tread the bitter path of suffering and death ;—that we can achieve freedom and justice by being charitable and by talking amiably to the enemy. We shrink

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from the belief that there is a devil in the world. God? Yes! but not a devil. So we spend our energies whitewashing the devil out of existence, instead of binding him in 'everlasting chains of darkness.' We say that evil is but a mistaken form of good or an immature development. We try to believe that our enemies are as anxious to achieve liberty for the world as we are, and that they are striving to bind mankind in fetters of iron only through lack of knowledge as to our intentions. Their hearts and intentions are good, we say, but they are misled, and after a talk with them round a table they will put off their 'shining armour' and become angels of light, carrying palm branches in place of swords and fetters. This is a pleasant theory, only it is not true; and we cannot get rid of evil by ignoring it, nor of the devil by buying him a new suit. There are men willing to die to destroy liberty just as there are others willing to die in its defence. It is not that they do not understand liberty; they do, and that is why they wish to destroy it. It is the enemy of their ideal. Whether liberty will survive or not depends upon whether there are more men inspired by God to die in defending liberty than there are inspired by the devil to die in opposing it. A thing lives while men love it sufficiently to die for it. We get what we deserve; and readiness to die for it is the price God has put on liberty. Words are too cheap to buy it. When some one suggested founding a new religion to supersede Christianity, Voltaire is reported to have asked if the founder was willing to be crucified for it, as, otherwise, it would stand no chance of success. It was a deep criticism, and showed that Voltaire was no fool. Blood is the test, not words. A nation can only

achieve liberty when it is determined to be free or die. 'Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it.' 'Never man spake' as Christ spake, but He did not save the world by talking to it, but by dying for it. Outpoured blood, not outpoured words, is the proof of moral convictions and the means of their propaganda. Our soldiers may not be learned, but they have learned that the side will win which has most moral power. The side with most moral strength will prove itself to be the one with most martyrs. And the side with most men ready to be martyrs will outstay the other. The spirit of martyrdom, not negotiation, is the path to liberty and peace. You cannot negotiate with a tiger. The dispute is too simple for negotiation. You have to kill the tiger or be killed. While I was on leave, a man told me that he had asked some soldiers from the Front why they were fighting, and they could not tell him. Quite so. All the deepest things are beyond telling. No true lover can tell why he loves. This trust in words, in being able to 'tell why,' is truly pathetic. I would not trust a wife's love if she could tell her husband why she loved him; nor would I trust our soldiers not to turn tail in battle if they could tell why they are fighting. They cannot tell, but with their poor lipless faces turned defiantly against the foe they can show why they are fighting. Let those who want to know the soldiers' reason why they fight go and see them there on the blasted field of battle, not ask them when they come home on leave. The lips of a soldier perish first as his poor dead body lies exposed on the battlefield, his rifle he clutches to the last, and it is a lesson terrible enough for the densest talker to understand.

The dear dead lads lying out in the open with their rifles pointing towards the enemy were speaking their reason *why* loud enough for the deaf to hear and the world to heed. They cried with Prometheus—

‘ I lie here upon my altar huge,
A sacrifice for man.’

Ideals must be died for if they are to be realized on earth, for they have bitter enemies who stick at nothing.

‘ Some day the soft Ideal that we wooed
Confronts us fiercely, foe-beset, pursued.’

And we have to defend our Ideal with our lives or be cravens and let it perish.

‘ Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil
side ;
Some great cause, God’s new Messiah, offering each the bloom
or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the
right.
And the choice goes by for ever ’twixt that darkness and
that light.’

History, with unimportant variations, is constantly repeating itself ; and in nothing is it so consistent as in the price it puts on liberty. The lease of liberty runs out ; and the lease has to be renewed. It is renewed by suffering and martyrdom. The dear dead lads whom I saw on that terrible afternoon were renewing the lease. With their bodies they had marked out a way over which the peoples of the earth will march to freedom and justice.

The view, all too common, that our soldiers regard the war as a kind of picnic ; and an attack as a sort of rush for the goal in a game of football ; is false, false as sin. It is a view blind to the whole psychology of the war, and it misses the meaning of our soldiers' gaiety as much as it ignores their fear and sorrow. The trenches are a Gethsemane to them, and their prayer is, ' Our Father, all things are possible unto Thee : take away this cup from me : nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.' One day, when I went into a mess-room in which letters were being censored, an officer said to me, ' Read this, Padre, there's a reference to you, and a candid expression of a man's attitude towards religion.' I took the letter, and it said, ' Our chaplain isn't far out when he says, in his book, that though we may speak lightly of the Church we don't think or speak lightly of Christ. However careless we may be when we are out of the trenches, when we are in we all pray. There is nothing else we can do.'

I have been eighteen months with a fighting regiment on the Front, and I have never spoken to any officer who did not regard it as a mathematical certainty that, unless he happened to fall sick or be transferred, neither of which he expected, he would be killed or wounded. And I agreed with him without saying it. He does not even hope to escape wounds. They are inevitable if he stays long enough ; for one battle follows another and his time comes. He only hopes to escape death and the more ghastly wounds. He hopes the wound when it comes will be a ' cushy one.' The men take the same view. The period before going

Most of the killing in modern war is done by the artillery and machine guns. A comparatively small number of men have seen the face of an enemy they know themselves to have killed. A regiment goes out to be shot at rather than to shoot. Unless this simple fact is grasped the mentality of our men will not be understood. The lust for killing Germans would never take a man out of his dug-out ; but the love of his country and the resolve to do his duty will take him out and lead him 'over the top.' It is what he volunteered for, but it goes hard when the time comes, for—

' We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides,
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides ;
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.'

The unburied men I saw had, a little time ago, no idea of becoming soldiers. They were the light of a home and the stay of a business. With that they were content. But the challenge came ; and they went out to defend the right against the wrong, and the true against the false. They toiled up a new Calvary 'with the cross that turns not back,' and now they lie buried in a strange land. They have lost all for themselves, but they have gained all for us and for those who will come after us.

' They saved others, themselves they could not save.'
They had to die for their ideal, and they died nobly.

' As Christ died to make men holy,
They have died to make men free.'

THE HOSPITAL TRAIN

WE were carried from our regiments to the hospital in ambulance cars. Some were suffering from gas poisoning. One lovely boy—for he was nothing more—was near to death with 'mustard' gas. The doctor at the dressing-station had opened a vein and bled him of a pint of blood. It was the only hope of saving him. But as the car bumped over the rough roads and the gas in his lungs grew more suffocating he almost despaired of reaching the hospital alive. Others were wounded; and one had appendicitis. A few of us had trench fever. After a period in hospital, during which we were honoured with a visit by General Byng, it was decided that we should go to the Base. We lay down on stretchers, and orderlies carried us to the waiting cars. At the station we were lifted into the hospital train. The racks had been taken down and stretchers put in their places. These were reserved for the 'lying cases.' The 'sitting cases' occupied the seats—one to each corner. It was afternoon, and as soon as the train began to move tea was served. The train sped on and, about sunset, a most excellent dinner was provided by the orderlies on board. It was the time of the new moon. 'Keep the window down,' said one, 'it is unlucky to see the new moon through glass, and we need all the good luck we can

get,' and he avoided looking through the glass until he had seen the moon through the open window. We chatted, read our magazines or slept as we felt inclined. The night wore on, and at about two o'clock we reached Rouen. Cars rushed us to one of the Red Cross Hospitals. A doctor slipped out of bed, examined our cards, decided in which wards we should be put, and orderlies led or carried us thither. A nurse showed each of us to his room. We were got to bed, and another nurse brought some tea. Next morning we were examined by a doctor, and put down for removal to England. The V.A.D. nurses are radiant as sunshine, and diffuse a spirit of merriment throughout the hospital. It was a pure joy to be under their care. At three o'clock the following morning, without previous warning, a nurse came and wakened us. We had half an hour to dress. Another nurse then came round with a dainty breakfast. We were put into cars and taken to the hospital train. It left as dawn was breaking, and we were on our way to 'Blighty.' We had a comfortable journey, and reached Havre about nine. Orderlies carried us on board ship and we were taken to our cots. Breakfast was served immediately. We felt a huge content, and hoped to be in England by night. But the ship remained by the quay all day. In the evening it moved out of the harbour and lay near its mouth. Towards midnight it slipped its anchor and headed for home. All had received life-belts and a card directing us which boat to make for if the ship should be torpedoed. Mine was 'Boat 5 Starboard.' My neighbour on the right had been on a torpedoed boat once and had no desire to be on

another. The lights of the ship were obscured or put out, and we silently stole over the waters towards the haven where we would be. There was no sound but the steady thump of the engines, and we were soon asleep. Shortly after dawn we awoke to find ourselves in the Southampton waters. A water-plane drew near, settled like a gull on the water, and then ploughed its way through the waves with the speed of a motor-boat. About nine o'clock we were carried off the boat to the station. Lady workers supplied us with telegraph forms, sweets and cigarettes; and orderlies brought us tea. We were then taken to the train. It was even more comfortable than the hospital trains in France; and we had lady nurses. On each side of the train, for its full length, were comfortable beds, and we were able to sit up or recline at our pleasure. Lunch was served on board, and it was such as to tempt the most ailing man. No shortage of food is allowed to show its presence on the hospital train. It has the first claim on the food supply, and it has the first claim to the railroad. It stops at no station except for its own convenience. Even the King's train stops to let the hospital train pass. The King bows to his wounded soldiers. England is very great in the things that matter. She makes no mistake in her order of precedence. We were under the care of a nurse who had reached the middle years. She had been on a torpedoed hospital ship; on one that struck a mine without bursting it; and on another that collided with a destroyer in the dark. She was greatly disappointed at the decision which had removed nurses from the hospital ships because of the danger from submarines.

She fully appreciated the chivalry of the men who would not let their women be drowned ; but it had robbed the women of a chance of proving their devotion, and she could not see why the men should do all the dying. The women were ready to meet death with the men and as their mates and equals. Their place was with the wounded whatever might befall, and they were ready. In the next ward was a Lancashire man, and she asked him how he liked being back in 'Blighty.' 'Sister,' he said, pointing to the nail on one of his fingers, 'I would not give that much of our back-yard for thirty acres in France.' And when we saw the welcome given to the hospital train we all echoed his sentiments. Hospital trains have run daily for three years now, and human nature can get used to anything. We thought that the people would have got used to the hospital train. A greater surprise never gladdened a man's heart than the one which awaited us as we steamed out of Southampton. All the women and children by the side of the railway were at their windows or in their gardens waving their hands to us. And all the way to Manchester the waving of welcoming hands never ceased. At every station the porters doffed their caps to the hospital train as it sped past. There was not a station large or small that did not greet us with a group of proud, smiling faces. Our eyes were glued to the windows all the way. For one day in our lives we were kings, and our procession through 'England's green and pleasant land' was a royal one. We passed through quiet country districts, but at every wall or fence there were happy English faces. We wondered where they all came from and how they knew

of our coming. There were tiny children sitting on all the railway fences waving to us. One little girl of four or five was sitting on the fence by a country station and waving her little hand to us. We had not seen an English child for months, and the Pope of long ago spoke truth when he said they are 'not Angles, but Angels.' The sight of them after so long an absence was as refreshing to the spirit as the sight of violets and primroses after a long and bitter winter.

At Birmingham the train made its only stop. Men and women of the St. John Ambulance Association boarded the train and supplied us with tea ; and, as the train moved out, stood at attention on the platform. At Manchester we received a warm welcome that told us we were in Lancashire. Men and women helped us to the waiting cars and handed cups of tea to us. It was raining of course (it being Manchester), but as we passed near a railway arch a waiting crowd rushed out into the rain and startled us with a cry of welcome which was also a cry of pain. Most of the men in the cars were Lancashire lads, and in the welcome given them there were tears as well as smiles. Lancashire has a great heart as well as a long head. It suffers with those who suffer, and the cry of the heart was heard in the welcome of its voice. There was a welcome too, at the door of the hospital and at the door of each ward. Water was brought to our bedside and then a tray bearing a well-cooked dinner.

We had reached home.

AFTER WINTER, SPRING

A MAN'S heart must be dead if, under the summer sun, he can look on the desolated ground of our Front in France without feeling the emotions of joy and hope. In the winter time the clumps of blasted trees looked like groups of forsaken cripples. Their broken branches stood out against the grey sky in utter nakedness, as if appealing to heaven against the inhumanity of man. It was more depressing to pass a ruined wood than a destroyed village. Some of the trees had all their limbs shattered, while others, thicker than a man's body, were cut clean through the middle, others again were torn up by the roots and lay sprawling on the ground. It seemed impossible that Spring could ever again clothe them in her garments of gladdening green. Most of us thought that the trees would appear amid the sunshine of the Summer black, gaunt and irreconcilable; pointing their mangled stumps towards those who had done them such irreparable wrong and, as the wind whistled through them, calling on all decent men to rise up and avenge them of their enemies. But suddenly we found that the reconciling Spring was back in the woods exercising all her old time witchery. Each broken limb was covered with fresh foliage and each scarred stump put out sprouts of green. The broken but blossoming woods grew into a picture of Hope infinitely more

sublime and touching than the one to which Watts gave the name. It was a picture drawn and coloured by the fingers of God, and it made the fairest of man's paintings look weak and false. Uprooted trees lay on the ground in full blossom, and shell-lopped branches again took on the form of beauty. The transformation was wonderful to behold. And it all happened in a week. When our men went into the trenches the trees were black, bare and bruised, but when they came out of the line into the support trenches the wood behind them was a tender green and had grown curved and symmetrical. It seemed as if the fairies of our childhood had returned to the earth and were lodging in the wood. Although two long-range naval guns lay hidden behind it and with deep imprecations opened their terrible mouths to hurl fiery thunderbolts at the enemy, the fairies seemed unafraid, and daily continued to weave for the trees beautiful garments of leaf and blossom. I have seen nothing that brought such gladness to the officers and men. A new spirit seemed abroad. We were in a new atmosphere and a new world. The war seemed already won and the work of renewal and reconstruction begun.

And now the Summer has done for the ground what the Spring did for the trees. Last Sunday, I was to hold a service on ground that was in the springtime 'No Man's Land.' Having ample time, I left the dusty road and walked across the broken fields through which our front line trenches had run. There were innumerable shell-holes, and I had to pick my way with care through the long grass and lingering barbed wire. I had been over the ground on the day following the

advance. Then it was a sea of mud with vast breakwaters of rusty barbed wire. Now, however, Nature's healing hand was at work. Slowly but surely the trenches were falling in, and the shell-holes filling up. The lips of the craters and trenches were red as a maiden's—red with the poppies which had come to them. Here and there were large patches of gold and white, where unseen hands had sown the mud with dog-daisies. There were other patches all ablaze with the red fire of the poppies, and as the slender plants swayed in the wind the fire leapt up or died down.

When the war broke out I was in the Poppyland around Cromer, and there I first heard the tramp of armed men on the way to France, and there first caught the strains of 'Tipperary'—the farewell song of the 'First Seven Divisions'—a strain I can never hear now without emotion. As I passed by these patches of blood-red poppies I thought of those old and stirring days at Cromer, when we watched a regiment of the original Expeditionary Force singing 'Tipperary' as it marched swingingly through the narrow streets. The declaration of war was hourly expected, and the pier and some of the Sunday-school rooms were given to the soldiers for billets. By morning every soldier had vanished and we could only guess where, but a remark made by one of them to another lingers still. They were standing apart, and watching the fuss the people were making of the regiment. 'Yes,' he said to his comrade, 'they think a great deal of the soldiers in time of War, but they don't think much of us in days of Peace.' The remark was so true that it cut like a knife, and the wound rankles yet. I have often

wondered what became of the youth that we sent out to France to the horrors of war with such memories of our attitude towards him in the times of peace. I hope he lived long enough to see our repentance. His memory haunted me among the poppies of Beaurains. In the Norfolk Poppyland there was nothing to compare with the red-coated army of poppies now occupying our old front line. In these trenches our gallant men had for nearly three years fought and bled, and it seemed as if every drop of blood poured out by them had turned into a glorious and triumphant poppy.

The Spring and Summer have taught me afresh that there is in our lives a Power that is not ourselves. It is immanent in us and in all things and yet transcends all. 'Change and decay in all around we see,' and still there is One Who changeth not, He is '*from* Everlasting *to* Everlasting—God.' He is the fountain of eternal life that no drought can touch. He heals the broken tree and the broken heart. He clothes the desolate fields of war with the golden corn of peace, and in the trenches that war has scored across the souls of men He plants the rich poppies of memory. He drives away the icy oppression of Winter with the breath of Spring, and in His mercy assuages 'the grief that saps the mind for those that here we see no more.' As in the dawn of creation His spirit brooded over the dark and formless void till there came forth order and beauty, so He broods over the chaos of human life till we see a relationship in all action, and a Divine purpose running through all things like a vein of gold. He Who turns rain-mists into rainbows and brings out of mud scarlet poppies and white-petalled daisies without a speck of

dirt upon them is at work in human life. Out of mud He has formed the poppy and out of the dust the beautiful body of man. Who then can set Him limits when He works in the finer material of man's soul? Eye hath not seen nor heart conceived the beauty that will come forth when His workmanship is complete. 'If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith,' who were made for immortality? His ways are past finding out but they are good. He puts out the sun but brings forth millions of stars in its stead. At His call they come flocking forth as doves to their windows. He blinds Milton but brings into his soul a flood of light such as never shone on sea or land, and in its rays he sees Paradise, lost and regained. He shuts Bunyan in a noisome prison and closes against him the door to his beloved Bedford, but He opens to him a magic window that looks on heaven, and the years pass swiftly as he watches the progress of the pilgrims towards the Celestial City. In the mud that I have seen stained with the life blood of our soldiers He has made poppies to grow. It is a parable he is speaking to us, that the heart of man may feel and believe that which it is beyond the power of the mind to grasp or the tongue to explain.

The wounds of France are deep and deadly, but they are not self-inflicted and they will heal. She will blossom again with a glory greater and purer than all her former glories. She is finding her soul and revealing a moral beauty and endurance such as few, even of her dearest friends, could have foretold. For ashes

God has given her beauty, and it is worth all her suffering. Not Voltaire but Joan of Arc is her pride to-day. When I was in Rouen I saw the fresh flowers which the people daily place on the spot where she died. France knows where her strength lies. Over Napoleon France has built a magnificent tomb of marble, but she has not placed in it a single flower. As I walked through it some time ago I felt depressed. It struck me cold. It is magnificent but dead. One of Joan of Arc's living flowers would be worth the whole pile. It is the most tremendous sermon ever preached on the vanity of military glory and the emptiness of genius and power when uninspired by moral and spiritual worth. France knows. She gives Joan of Arc a flower, but Napoleon a stone. France was never so great as now, and never of such supreme importance to the world. We could not do without France now. On her coins she represents herself as a Sower that goes forth sowing. It is a noble ideal, and truly where she scatters her seeds of thought the fair flowers of liberty, equality and fraternity spring up as poppies spring where the blood of our soldiers has watered her fields. France is the fair Sower among the nations, and it will be our eternal glory that when she was suddenly and murderously attacked in her fields by her brutal and envious neighbour, who shamelessly stamps a bird of prey on his coins for his symbol, and a skull and cross-bones on his soldiers' headgear as the expression of his ambition, England came to her rescue, and not in vain. The German sword has gone deeply into the heart of France, but it will leave not a festering wound but a well of water, at which mankind will

drink and be refreshed. Wound the earth and there springs forth water ; wound France and there springs forth inspiration. Trample France in the mud and she comes forth again pure, passionate and free as a poppy blown by the summer breeze.

‘ If Winter come,
Can Spring be far behind ? ’

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